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Nick Carter Stories

NICK CARTER AND THE STOLEN DUCHESS

OR

THE QUICK WORK OF ONE NIGHT

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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Nick Carter and the Stolen Duchess;

Or, THE QUICK WORK OF ONE NIGHT.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A BOLD STEAL.

"What's the trouble?"

"This way and I'll show you."

"Into our stateroom?"

"Just for a moment."

"Careful! Don't run into that invalid."

"I see her, madam. Step into the stateroom, please, and—now, Buck, we have her! Lively!"

"Help——"

The last word, which would have been a piercing scream of terror, barely reached the lips of the woman called madam, for the moment she entered the stateroom she was seized from behind by her female companion. A hand was clapped rudely over her mouth by a man who sprang from behind the closed door, and that hand held a handkerchief soaked with chloroform.

There was a brief but terrible struggle, as when a woman fights for her life, but it was over in a very few moments, and the woman sank to the floor of the stateroom, unconscious, and as pale as if dead.

She was young and beautiful, and was clad in a rich traveling dress and a long dark cloak.

She was the bride of a famous young Englishman, the Duke of Westfield.

Her assailants were two of the shrewdest and most dangerous criminals in the world, and they now had on hand the boldest and most atrocious job they had ever undertaken.

The woman was Clara Perry, nicknamed Pug Perry, the cleverest female crook England ever produced.

The man, then artfully disguised, was the notorious English cracksman, Buck Bagley.

Nick Carter twice had sent this crook to Sing Sing, and twice he had escaped in company with a most reliable confederate named Carroll.

When Nick first arrested this gang, for the robbery of a Nassau Street broker, Pug Perry had cleverly eluded the Carters and escaped to England.

By means of forged recommendations, she there got a maid's position with the young American heiress who had married the Duke of Westfield, a nobleman with more title than money.

Pug Perry was so very clever that she soon became a favorite with the duchess, and she made the most of it. She learned that the young bride and her husband soon were to visit her wealthy father, Mr. Jacob Nelson, the millionaire pork packer of Cincinnati.

Then Pug Perry laid out one of the boldest jobs on record. She knew Bagley had escaped, and by letters and cipher cablegrams they planned the big job.

In England Pug got two confederates, named Trull and Garrett, both clever crooks, and they soon had things ready for the duchess scheme, which was nothing less than to steal the duchess from under the very nose of her husband, the moment their steamer was docked in New York. Their idea then was to hold her for a big ransom from her wealthy father.

"Lively, Buck! Don't lose a second," Pug Perry hurriedly whispered, as they lowered the senseless woman to the stateroom floor.

The room was off a rather dimly lighted corridor, which ran forward from the main saloon, and most of the passengers were on deck at this time, where everything was bustle, stir, and confusion.

Buck Bagley, who with several others had boarded the steamer off Sandy Hook, vented a low growl.

"Don't rush things, Pug," he said coolly. "Either we

shall do this job up brown, or else we shall get caught at it. If we get excited, it's a cinch we shall be caught, so keep a cool head."

"I'm cool enough, don't you fear."

"That's right. Get rid of this rag. The smell might give us away."

Pug grabbed the handkerchief the cracksman tendered, and thrust it into a pitcher of water, while Bagley bent quickly over the senseless woman, pressed open her mouth, and poured a few drops of dark fluid upon her tongue.

"That'll make her dead to the world for a time," he muttered, as he straightened up. "Now where's her husband?"

"On the saloon deck," Pug hurriedly whispered. "They were together, and I made an excuse to get the woman down here."

"Who's with the Duke of Westfield?"

"Mr. Nelson and two headquarters detectives. They boarded the steamer when you did."

"What are the detectives here for?"

"Nelson, the old moneybag, employed them to look after the couple and have an eye over their jewelry."

"And all of 'em are now on deck?"

"They were there two minutes ago," cried Pug softly. "Heaven knows where they now may be."

"Humph!" grunted Bagley. "We can fool headquarters men all right. It takes Nick Carter to tangle up my wires, the devil take him. If——"

"For Heaven's sake, Buck, hurry up. If the duchess is absent too long, her husband may seek her here."

"She's not been here a minute yet," growled Bagley; "and a minute's not long. Was Trull outside with the gocart?"

"Yes."

"See if the way is clear for him."

Pug started for the stateroom door and peered out.

The long, dim corridor was nearly deserted, and all Pug saw was a man wheeling a woman in a large invalid chair.

During the voyage the passengers had occasionally seen this same woman wheeled about a bit, but she was always well wrapped and closely veiled, and the man let nobody molest or speak to her, saying that she was a feeble American woman, returning home from Baden, and that he was her nurse and attendant.

The couple had two staterooms near those occupied by Westfield; and by the looks of things, the attendant now had wrapped the veiled woman in her chair for the purpose of taking her from the steamer.

"The way is clear, Buck," she whispered sharply.

"Run 'em in here, then."

Pug opened the stateroom door, and uttered a sharp:

"Hist!"

It was heard by the man wheeling the invalid, for he was only a few yards distant. After he shot one swift glance through the long corridor, he ran the wheeled chair into the stateroom.

"Now look lively, Trull!" cried Bagley. "Each to his part!"

Then a most extraordinary scene occurred. The invalid leaped quickly out of the chair, threw off a loose blouse and skirts, and was revealed to be a slight, thin-featured man.

"A hand here, Garrett!" hissed Bagley. "Quick!"

Like a flash the attendant helped Bagley place the duchess in the chair, and in ten seconds they had her veiled and wrapped beyond recognition, precisely as the pretended invalid had been.

The bonnet, veil, and long dark traveling cloak which they removed from her—Pug Perry seized these, darted to a mirror and quickly put them on, then drew the veil carefully over her face.

The cloak so covered her garments, and her figure was so nearly like that of the other woman, that, with the veil drawn down, one could not easily have detected the fraud.

The entire change had been made in a very few seconds.

"Are you ready, Pug?" inquired Bagley coolly.

"One moment. I must have her gloves."

Garrett quickly drew down the wrap from over the senseless woman, and Pug stripped off the delicate lavender gloves.

"Now, Buck, I'm ready," she whispered sharply.

Bagley opened the stateroom door and looked out.

"The way is still clear," said he. "Away with you, Garrett. You'll find Carroll with a cab at the head of the pier. Keep near him, Trull, and get her away. I'll be at the head of the pier by the time you get there."

Garrett quickly wheeled his burden into the corridor, and started for the gangway. Trull followed a short distance behind.

"Now, Pug, what about the duke?" whispered Bagley.

"Leave him to me," was the reply. "I'll play the game till you have her well away. Then wait for me at the head of the pier."

"Sure!" cried Bagley. "I've got a taxi there."

"Go at once, then, and wait till I join you."

Left alone, Pug Perry's nerves became stiff as steel. She locked the stateroom door, and put the key in her pocket. Then she drew on the lavender gloves, made sure her veil was well in place, and walked out upon the saloon deck.

There was a big crowd of passengers there, bidding each other farewell, and some were already preparing to go ashore.

Westfield, the husband of the woman then occupying the invalid chair, saw Pug approaching and hastened to join her.

The Cincinnati pork packer glanced at her and nodded, and so did the two headquarters men, and she nodded back at them and completely fooled them.

"Where have you been?" asked Westfield.

"Only down to our stateroom," murmured Pug, bending her head as if to fix the skirt of her cloak. "My maid is getting a few odds and ends together."

"Ah, I see."

"Go and be agreeable to papa until we go ashore," whispered Pug. "I wish to look over the rail here for a moment, and watch the passengers go ashore. I'll join you presently."

Westfield nodded and complied.

Pug went and leaned over the rail, from which she could see the gangway and view the great throng of passengers which was streaming out upon the pier, and mingling with the crowd already there.

Three minutes passed. Then Pug saw an invalid chair wheeled over the gangway plank, and disappear under the shed of the pier.

She glanced at Westfield and the group of men, with whom he still was talking, and saw that none of them were

looking at her, then quickly slipped into the saloon, hastened down to the gangway, and left the steamer.

The liner had been docked just eight minutes.

At the head of the pier Pug saw an expressman loading an empty invalid chair into his wagon. Two blocks away a cab was whirling rapidly up the street, and in a taxi near the pier sat Buck Bagley, cool and complacent.

Pug Perry quickly joined Bagley, and the taxi was driven rapidly away.

Just at that moment Westfield began looking for his wife.

CHAPTER II.

NICK'S SHREWD DEDUCTIONS.

Thirty minutes after the departure of Bagley and Pug Perry, a swiftly driven motor rolled down upon the pier and stopped near the steamer's gangway.

Out of it sprang three men, who quickly hastened aboard. The foremost was the celebrated detective, Nick Carter, and he was closely followed by two of his assistants, Chick and Patsy.

They had responded to a telephone call, the character of which told Nick that some unusual case was on the docket, and that haste was in order.

On coming over the gangway he was met by the Duke of Westfield and Mr. Nelson, both in great distress and excitement.

Nick knew the millionaire both by sight and reputation, and quickly shook hands with him.

"Not a word here, gentlemen," he commanded, with a significant glance at the crowd of people now thronging the lower saloon. "Let us have a private interview."

"This way, then," cried Westfield. "Come to my stateroom."

Followed by the three detectives, the Duke of Westfield hastened to his stateroom.

The moment Nick entered the room, he turned quickly to Patsy and whispered:

"Look for an empty vial, or a cloth, or sponge. There has been chloroform used in this room."

Patsy nodded, and both His Grace of Westfield and Mr. Nelson looked suspicious.

"What did you say to him, Mr. Carter?" demanded the millionaire.

"I shall tell you presently," Nick quickly answered. "First, Mr. Nelson, what's the trouble here?"

In three minutes Nick knew all they could tell, but he had sized up the situation in half that time.

"Your wife and her maid both missing, eh?" said he, with a sharp glance at Westfield's white face. "Where are your two headquarters men, Mr. Nelson?"

"Gone about their business," cried the millionaire, with bitter asperity. "I discharged them at once, and ordered them out of my sight. Good heavens, sir, of what use were they? I wanted detectives, and police headquarters sent me a brace of blockheads."

Nick smiled faintly.

"I have called upon you, Mr. Carter, to take charge of this extraordinary case. Money is no object, sir, and I know that you are to be relied upon."

Nick ignored the compliment.

"When did you board the steamer, Mr. Nelson?" he asked.

"Off Sandy Hook."

"With the two detectives?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did any other persons come aboard at the same time?"

"Yes. A number of reporters, and several men who were strangers to me."

"Did you suspect any trouble of this kind, Mr. Nelson, that led you to take detectives aboard?"

"No, I did not," was the quick reply. "I employed them only because my daughter, the duchess, has a very expensive wardrobe, and many valuable jewels. I wanted them properly guarded."

"I see," said Nick dryly. "The wardrobe and jewels probably are safe enough. But the duchess herself has been stolen."

"Stolen!" gasped the millionaire.

"Stolen!" exclaimed the Duke of Westfield, aghast.

"Precisely."

"But——"

"Patience, gentlemen," Nick curtly interrupted. "The facts speak for themselves. It is impossible that the duchess has disappeared willingly. Nor can both she and her maid have suddenly committed suicide by drowning. Hence, since both are missing, a plot to abduct the duchess certainly existed, and the maid was one of the gang of conspirators."

"By Jove——"

"Wait a bit, sir. Time is valuable, and I want the precise facts as quickly as possible. I must know how this job was done, and get on the track of the scoundrels at once. Answer my questions."

"Ask them," cried the duke quickly.

"How many servants are with you?" Nick asked.

"Only two. My valet, named Peters, and my wife's maid."

"What is the woman's name?"

"Clara Parsons."

"A young woman?"

"Yes, and my wife's favorite servant."

"Which made deception all the easier," said Nick. "How long was it after the steamer was docked, when you missed your wife?"

"Not more than ten minutes."

"Humph, the job was quickly and cleverly done. We are up against no ordinary knaves. Where was Peters at the time?"

"He was forward, looking after our baggage."

"That lets him out of the plot," said Nick promptly. "What have you found, Patsy?"

Patsy held up a dripping handkerchief found in the water pitcher.

Nick quickly took it, and briefly held it near his nose.

"Chloroform," said he. "There's no doubt about it. I detected the dead odor when I first entered."

"Heavens, sir, was my wife——"

"Do not delay me with questions," interposed Nick. "Each moment may be of value. Mr. Nelson, call the purser here, and have him bring the passenger lists."

Nick spread open the handkerchief and quickly examined it. It was perfectly plain.

"No mark or initial," muttered Nick. "Duke, was this stateroom door unlocked when you came here to seek your wife?"

"No, sir, it was locked. The stewardess admitted me with a pass-key."

Nick straightened up.

"Tell me," said he; "just what you saw your wife do from the time the steamer was docked until you last saw her."

The duke quickly complied.

"She was on the saloon deck with me when the steamer was docked. Just after the gangways were opened, her maid came and asked her to come down to the stateroom for a moment."

"Ah, I see."

"My wife went, sir. A little later she came up on deck again, and remarked that she wished to look over the rail for a few moments to see the passengers leaving, and she asked me to continue my talk with her father and the two detectives."

"Careful, now! Was your wife veiled at that time?"

"Yes, she was."

"Humph!" grunted Nick. "It was not your wife at all. It was your wife's maid."

"Impossible!" cried the duke.

"It's a fact," persisted Nick. "Your wife already had been chloroformed, and the maid's confederates were then getting her off the steamer. That's why the maid wanted to watch the passengers leaving. She waited till she saw the job successfully done, and then she also slipped away."

"But, sir——"

"Wait! Here's the purser."

The latter entered at that moment, with the passenger lists in his hand.

Nick, with shrewd discernment, was rapidly ferreting out the precise facts of the strange abduction. He knew now that the woman must have been kidnaped and removed from the steamer. He knew, too, that she could have been taken ashore only by some means so commonplace as to have caused no suspicions. Hence his first question to the purser.

"Purser," he cried; "were there any invalids among your saloon passengers?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply.

"One requiring a chair on wheels?"

"Just that, sir. A Mrs. Vandyke."

"Know anything about her?"

"Not a thing, sir. Her tickets were regular, and she was wheeled aboard in Liverpool. She had one male attendant only, and her meals were served in her stateroom."

"Its location?"

"The third from this, forward."

"See if she has been taken ashore."

"I know that she has, sir," said the purser. "I saw her attendant wheel her over the gangway in her chair."

"You think you did!" dryly observed Nick, who now saw plainly how the job had been done.

Then he turned abruptly to Chick.

"Go out on the pier, and see if you can trace that invalid chair."

While Nick continued his inquiries in the stateroom, Chick hastened out upon the pier, and in three minutes he traced the chair to the wagon of the expressman, who still was waiting at the head of the pier.

Chick quickly made himself known.

"Where did you get that invalid chair?" he then asked.

"From a man who wheeled a sick woman off the boat, sir," replied the expressman. "I'm to take it up to Eighty-first Street."

"Much good that will do you," thought Chick.

"What became of the sick woman?" he demanded.

"She was put in a cab out yonder and driven away."

"Who had charge of her?"

"Three men, sir. They lifted her out of the chair and into the cab. I thought she was dead, by the way they handled her."

"She was veiled?"

"Yes, sir."

"What then?"

"Then two of the men got into the cab with her and were driven away."

"What about the third man?"

"He wheeled the empty chair over to me, and told me where to take it. Then he got into a taxi out there by the corner, and waited till a woman came and joined him."

"Then he drove away with her?"

"Yes, after the cab."

"Give me a description of the several parties," commanded Chick.

The expressman complied as well as he could, and Chick made a note of the descriptions, and hastened back to report to Nick.

His information instantly clinched Nick's story of the crime.

"Go try to trace that cab and taxi, Patsy," he quickly commanded, and Patsy vanished from the room.

Nick turned to the millionaire.

"Now, Mr. Nelson, if you wish me to take this case, you must follow my instructions to the letter," said he decisively.

"We will do so, Carter."

"At what hotel do you stop?"

"The Holland."

"Very good. Have the Duke of Westfield's baggage taken up there, and then wait there till I come. I will join you both at the Holland in about an hour. Chick, you come with me."

CHAPTER III.

A SURE CLEW.

Eight hours later the news of the extraordinary abduction had spread like wildfire. The wires had carried the story around the world, and the evening editions of the New York newspapers were full of it, and they emphasized the fact that the extraordinary case had been placed entirely under Nick Carter's investigation, and predicted that the famous detective would speedily accomplish the ends desired.

It was eight o'clock in the evening. In the sumptuous parlor of a suite of rooms in the Holland House, Nick Carter was seated with his distinguished clients. Both had perfect confidence in him, yet no trace of the stolen duchess had yet been found.

Patsy had lost all track of the cab and taxi. Nick as yet had made only one other move. He knew that a plot so promptly and cleverly executed must have been planned by mail or wire from England, and he had sent Chick in search of recent cablegrams which might throw light upon the affair.

Despite the Duke of Westfield's anxiety and impatience, Nick was quietly waiting for a move which he knew the gang of abductors soon would be sure to make. He was convinced that their scheme was to extort a big ransom

from the millionaire, and that they would force this issue as quickly as possible, rather than incur the dangers of holding their distinguished victim a prisoner.

"We certainly shall hear from them," said he, in reply to a question from the Duke of Westfield. "And in that way I may get a clew by which to run them down."

"Then you really think they will communicate with us?"

"I certainly do," repeated the detective. "I believe that we shall hear from them in some way within the next——"

Nick was going to say within the next twenty-four hours, but his prediction was verified even then, for he was interrupted by a knock on the door.

"Come in," he called.

A bell boy appeared on the threshold.

"Mr. Nelson is wanted at the telephone office, sir," said he.

Nick quickly arose.

"I am the one wanted!" exclaimed Nelson, starting up.

"But I am the one who will do the talking." Nick dryly answered. "You may come with me, however. If the party on the other end of the wire is all right, you shall have the phone."

Nelson made no objection, and they started downstairs, the Englishman remaining in the room.

On their way down Chick was encountered, just returning, and he made a brief report.

"I have run down two cablegrams, both in a cipher code. Both were sent from London the day before the steamer sailed."

"Have you got copies of them?"

"Sure."

"We will examine them later," said Nick. "Come with us."

In a moment the three men were at the telephone booth. Nick took the phone, and, cleverly imitating the brusque voice of the wealthy pork packer, he called sharply:

"Hello!"

"Hello," came the answer. "Are you Mr. Jacob Nelson, at the Holland House?"

To Chick's surprise, Nick abruptly put his hand over the mouthpiece.

"By Jove, Chick!" he whispered sharply "I know that voice."

"No!"

"It is that of Buck Bagley, the English cracksman."

"The dickens!"

"And the maid, his confederate, must be Pug Perry, who escaped us and fled to England."

"Eureka! I'll go my pile on it."

"We are up against that same old gang, all right, and their scheme is now very plain," declared Nick. "Wait a bit."

Then he took his hand off the mouthpiece again, and called, as before:

"Hello!"

"Hello! What the devil's the matter with you?"

Nick was right; the voice was that of Buck Bagley.

"The matter was with the wire, not with me," cried Nick.

"Are you Mr. Jacob Nelson?"

"Yes. Who are you?"

"I'm one of the gang who stole the duchess," cried Bagley bluntly.

"Then you're an infernal knave," said Nick, still imitating Nelson's tones.

"Never mind about telling me that," sharply retorted Bagley. "You listen to me, Mr. Nelson, or you'll never get another chance."

"You certainly don't mean——"

"Keep quiet and listen," commanded Bagley. "We've got the woman, and she's all right. If you do what we tell you, she will not be harmed. If you don't, you'll never see her again."

"You don't mean that you will murder her?"

"That's just what I mean," cried Bagley. "We're out for the stuff, and we mean to get it. You listen, and let me do the talking. We want one million dollars out of you, and we're going to have it. You'll not miss it much, and we need it. If you agree to pay, we'll provide the way, and release the woman after we get the money."

"What if I don't?"

"If you don't, you'll soon receive a dead body by express. We mean business, Mr. Nelson, and that goes. Now you may have your say, but I want no fooling. Talk business or nothing. What is your answer?"

"If you're a man, don't leave that phone," cried Nick, pretending to be greatly disturbed. "I must have time to consider your offer."

"That won't do. It's got to be settled now."

Nick knew better, but he did not say so. He knew that this gang would argue and threaten for many a day, in order to extort the money demanded.

"Give me until to-morrow to think over the matter."

"No, sir! It's now or never."

"You're a knave!" cried Nick. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I will——"

Then he shut off the wire again, and turned sharply to Chick.

"Run to the nearest telephone," he said hurriedly; "and call up central. Have them learn what number is now connected with this telephone. I'll keep this scoundrel talking until you can accomplish it. Rush things!"

"You bet!" cried Chick, as he departed.

Nick again reopened the circuit, and put up a bluff to explain the delay.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "Why don't you answer?"

Bagley's voice, uglier than ever, instantly replied.

"See here!" he cried. "I'll stand for no more fooling. If you shut off that phone again, you'll have heard the last of me, and the last of this woman."

"You're wrong!" cried Nick. "The trouble is with the wire."

"You're a liar! You're up to some game. But you'll find that I am ready for you at every point. I want your answer now or never."

"I've just told you what I would do."

"Tell me again."

"I'll consider the matter and inform you to-morrow."

"Not on your life! You'll inform me now or never."

"Wait till I consult the duke," cried Nick. "If he'll provide half the money, I will accept your terms."

"Is he there?"

"He is in his room."

"I'll give you three minutes," cried Bagley. "No longer!"

Nick took five, however, in order to give Chick time. All he now wanted was to locate the number without Bagley's knowledge.

"Hello!" he presently called.

Bagley answered at once.

"Say it!" he cried.

"I've talked with the duke."

"Well?"

"He refuses even to consider your outrageous demand."

"He does, eh?" and Nick heard a snarl come over the wire. "All right, then! We'll forward the body by express."

"Wait! I have an offer to make you."

"No use! I will accept only my own. It's that or nothing."

Chick returned at this moment.

"All right, Nick," he whispered. "I could not get the number, but the call came through the Harlem central. The station is in Harlem."

Nick nodded, then reverted to Bagley.

"Hark you!" he cried.

"I'm listening!" cried Bagley; "but I'll not be much longer. What do you say?"

"I say this," cried Nick. "I will consider the matter until to-morrow, and put my answer in the *Evening Cable* under personals."

"Not by a long chalk! That won't do!"

"It will have to do. I may decide to accept your offer. If you harm your victim, however, I'll spend my last dollar to run you down."

"Say, see here——"

"Not another word, you scoundrel!" cried Nick forcibly. "See to-morrow's *Cable!* You'll find that I mean business as well as you. Now ring off, you scoundrel, and await my answer."

And Nick instantly hung up the receiver, and rang off. His game was to force Bagley to let the matter hang fire. He knew he had fixed him for twenty-four hours, at least, and he now was ready for active work.

He called in the telephone girl.

"If anybody calls for Mr. Nelson, or for the Duke of Westfield," said he; "you state that they are not here, and that you don't know where they can be found. In case I want them by wire, I will tell you my name is John Smith."

"I understand, sir," bowed the girl.

"That will tie Bagley's hands for a time, and give us a chance to run down this clew," said Nick to Chick, as they returned to the parlor.

There Nick quickly informed his clients of the situation, and of the important trail he had struck. They readily consented to remain in the hotel, excluding visitors and reporters, while Nick continued the work so well begun.

The two detectives then hastened to the Harlem telephone central.

There they ran against a snag.

The girl at the switchboard, through which the call had come, could not locate Bagley's telephone. She was an old hand at the business, however, and her ear was acutely trained to notice any unusual action of the wires.

Led by Nick's inquiries, she said:

"I thought there was something wrong, for the sound indicated an imperfect connection on the line. So I asked the party for the number of his phone, so a lineman might correct the trouble. I since have learned that he gave me a false number."

"He doesn't wish to be located."

"It appears so."

"It's plain enough," said Nick, turning to Chick. "You remember that Bagley is a clever electrician. He has procured a telephone, and has made a secret connection, in order to safely open his negotiations with Nelson."

"Sure thing, Nick."

That is why he said I could not locate his phone."

"No doubt of it."

Nick reverted to the girl.

"Can you give me any idea of the locality from which that call was made?" he asked.

"I can help you a little, sir. I know it came over the long-distance wire that runs out through Pelham and New Rochelle."

"Good!"

"Perhaps I can do a little better than that," added the operator. "Yet I cannot be positive, for I rely entirely upon my ear in making the estimate. But I should say that the man's voice came over about ten or twelve miles of wire."

"Capital!" cried Nick. "You have clinched a theory I already had formed. Chick, our gang is in hiding out Pelham way. We'll go out there. Young lady, be careful to state that no inquiries have been made here about this matter, in case you are questioned."

"Trust me, Mr. Carter."

"Come on, Chick. We'll head for Pelham."

CHAPTER IV.

GOING AGAINST ODDS.

Nick had several objects in hastening to Pelham, where he and Chick arrived soon after nine o'clock. He wanted to consult the local telephone operator, also the real-estate agents, for he believed that Bagley and his gang were concealed somewhere in that direction, and most likely had rented some out-of-town house for the job they now had on hand. A real-estate agent might have a list of such country houses, and perhaps could tell if one had recently been rented.

Both detectives adopted a slight disguise, and separated after leaving the train. Chick started for the telephone central, and Nick aimed to locate a real-estate office.

Five minutes later, while still searching, Nick paused on a street corner, and presently a woman, who had been briefly watching him, stepped up to him and said:

"Please, sir, will you direct me to the nearest drug store?"

Though he did not betray it, Nick never was more startled in his life.

The woman was Pug Perry! Her pretty face was partly veiled, and she wore a dark wig, but Nick instantly recognized her.

"Does she recognize me?" was his first thought. "That's the question."

She did not appear to, and Nick took a chance that his slight disguise was effective, and the meeting accidental.

"Certainly, miss," said he, bowing politely. "If you'll allow me, I will show you the way."

"Really, sir, I dislike to trouble you," smiled Pug, looking pleased.

"It will be no trouble," said Nick, rather dryly. "Come this way."

Pug smiled again, and thanked him, saying with artful innocence:

"I'm seldom out alone at this hour, sir, and I feel afraid. But I had to go for some medicine."

"I'll see that you get it," thought Nick.

"My sister was taken ill, and we have no man to send. So I was compelled to come."

"Do you live far from here?"

"Rather, and over a country road," said Pug, in tremulous tones. "I'm all of a shake, sir, the walk was so lonely."

"Too bad," said Nick, with sympathy. "It's hardly safe for a young lady like you to be out alone at this hour."

"I know it, sir, and that's why I feel afraid. There are so many toughs around, and such terrible crimes committed."

"True, and I feel for you," said Nick. "I am out merely on an evening stroll, and will see you safely home, if you wish."

"Oh, sir, I should be very grateful."

"No occasion at all," smiled Nick. "I shall be pleased to look after you."

And he meant it, but Pug didn't appear to notice the insinuation. She acted precisely as if Nick was a stranger, willing to do her a kindness. But Nick now had her measure, and saw the bold game she was playing.

"It was a chance meeting, but she knows me, all right," he said to himself.

"These crooks have seen the evening papers, and know that I am on the case. This woman knows that I have struck some clew that brought me out here, and it has alarmed her. Now she aims to throw me into Bagley's clutches, hoping thus to choke me off until they can secure the ransom. Well, that's good enough for me, and I'll go up against it."

These thoughts passed quickly through Nick's mind as they approached the drug store, which Nick had noticed only a few minutes before.

"I'll wait here on the steps," said he. "Then I'll see you safely home."

"Thank you so much, sir," cried Pug. "I'll not be long."

She felt sure Nick did not recognize her, and now believed she had him well in hand. Nick saw this plainly enough, and knew she would not attempt to elude him. He knew, moreover, if he gave her the slip and then shadowed her, that she would not return to the gang, but would scheme to warn them of their danger.

"There's only one way, and that's to go with her," he decided. "It's going up against big odds, but I must locate that gang at any hazard. I'll take the chances."

He glanced into the drug store, and saw the druggist was filling a prescription, for which Pug Perry was waiting. Nick saw her looking furtively out at him, and knew it would not do to go out of her sight.

He hoped Chick might happen along, to give him a pointer to shadow them; but the store was on a side street, and nobody was passing.

A second glance told Nick that he might have to wait several minutes. Then he hit upon another plan, and leaning indifferently against the lighted window, with his back to the pane, he drew out his notebook. Holding it so that his movements could not be observed from within, he quickly wrote on a blank page:

"DRUGGIST: I am Nick Carter, the detective, and am on an important case against this woman. Cautiously notice which road we take from town, then hasten to the central station of the local telephone company. My assistant, Chick Carter, expects to meet me there. Give him this paper. If you fail to find him, telephone the following to my New York residence at once: 'I have met Pug Perry. She thinks I do not recognize her, and she aims to lure me into the retreat of the gang. I shall go with her. Get on to the trail at once.'"

It took Nick about a minute to write the missive, but the chief thing was to get it secretly into the hands of the druggist.

Nick folded the sheet, then wrapped a dollar bank note around it, and thrust both into his vest pocket. Then he walked carelessly to and fro, and took the druggist's measure. The detective noted that he was a young man, and that he looked reasonably quick-witted.

Nick waited till he saw him doing up Pug's parcel; then he sauntered into the store. Pug looked up, then partly averted her face, for fear he might know her, but Nick had anticipated this, and said pleasantly:

"I'm going to buy a cigar to smoke on my way back."

"A good idea, sir," Pug nodded, furtively watching him.

Nick turned to the cigar case.

"Three for a quarter," said he carelessly.

The druggist gave Pug her package, then turned to serve Nick.

The detective selected three cigars, and tossed the folded bank note upon the case.

Then he turned to Pug, with a gesture toward the soda fountain opposite, and said:

"Will you have a glass of soda before leaving?"

Pug turned in the direction indicated, and as quick as a flash Nick raised one arm behind her, and made a swift, significant move to the druggist.

The latter had just opened the bank note, and discovered the folded paper.

He looked up to speak, then saw Nick's sign, and without a word he turned to his cash register to make the change.

The ruse was worked in an instant, even while Pug was declining the drink.

Nick bowed agreeably, then turned and took his change.

"Much obliged, sir," he said, with just the slightest point.

The druggist looked as innocent as a wooden image.

"All right, sir," said he. "Call again."

"He's a wise one, and up to snuff," Nick mentally observed, as he opened the door and departed with his crafty companion.

One look at her face told Nick that he had fooled her.

"It's very kind of you to see me safely home, sir," she said, smiling up at him in the darker street.

"Not at all," said Nick genially. "It's really quite a pleasure."

Pug laughed, and accepted his arm, for she now felt that she had him dead to rights.

In ten minutes they were well out of the town, and following a lonely road through the open country. Soon the last house was left far behind, and they entered a belt of woodland. This, too, was passed, yet not a sign of a dwelling met Nick's gaze.

"It's quite a long walk, sir," observed Pug, with affected demureness.

"I am enjoying it," smiled Nick.

"You will find it lonely returning."

"I will light a cigar for a companion. I shall have to ask you to get me some matches."

"I will give you some at the house, sir. I hope you'll come in and rest for a few minutes."

"Long enough to light my cigar, at all events," said Nick agreeably.

He saw that her design was to get him into the house on their arrival, and he consented in order to dispel any suspicion on her part. But Pug Perry had none. She now felt sure that Nick had not recognized her.

At the end of another half mile the road again ran through a woodland, and Pug presently cried softly:

"Yonder is the house, sir."

They were approaching a large, isolated residence, which stood nearly fifty yards from the road, and was half hidden among the surrounding trees. Nick could see the roof of a stable beyond, and the tall tower of a windmill. The commodious grounds were well cleared, the front fenced for quite a distance, and the fine appearance of the place, with its neat lawn and broad gravel driveways, was not at all what Nick had been expecting, and he now mistrusted that Bagley had rung some well-to-do person into his infamous scheme. Yet it was gloomy and silent under the tall spreading trees, and from the dwelling itself not a solitary light was visible.

"The house looks deserted," said Nick, walking more slowly.

"Oh, they're in there, all right," replied Pug, laughing a little uneasily.

"Out back?"

"Probably," said Pug. "My sick sister is in one of the back chambers."

"I'm quite sure I haven't got a match," Nick quietly observed.

As he spoke he freed his arm from the woman's hand, and carelessly felt in one of his pockets—but not for a match.

"I'll get you some matches in the house, sir," she hastened to say, with an inviting smile. "I really hope you'll go in with me."

"Oh, yes, I'm going in there," nodded Nick, drawing closer to her.

His arm stole back of her, and she looked up again to reply. Then as quick as a flash, when her lips parted, Nick passed his arm around her neck, and thrust into her mouth the gag which he had drawn from his pocket a moment before.

Only two words escaped her:

"You devil!"

They were only a smothered, inarticulate gasp, that was choked back in the woman's throat before she could speak or scream. But her hands went to her face, and she began to fight like a wild cat.

"Quiet, you jade!" he hissed sternly. "You force me to handle you thus roughly. I'm going into that house, all right, but I'm going in there alone, not with you."

Then he caught her by the shoulders, quickly drawing both arms back of her, and slipped a pair of bracelets around her wrists.

Just beyond the fence was a low stone wall, between the road and the adjoining woodland, and Nick forced her to a seat on the wall, then quickly secured her feet with a piece of line, a quantity of which he always carried. Then he lifted her over the wall, as indifferently as if she had been a bag of meal, and made her fast to a tree twenty yards from the road.

"Now stay here until I return," he said grimly.

CHAPTER V.

HELD UP.

With Pug Perry down and out for a time, Nick quickly prepared for heavier business.

Cautiously vaulting the fence at the nearest corner of the extensive grounds, the detective stole along the edge of the estate, designing to approach the dwelling from the rear.

That Buck Bagley and his gang were in the house, and the Duke of Westfield's wife a prisoner there, he now felt reasonably certain.

"But I'm blessed if I can understand how they rung the owner of this fine residence in their scheme," he thought, while making a cautious circuit toward the stable.

"It's a fine country mansion, and should belong to a man of wealth.

"Yet such a man would hardly take a hand with Bagley's gang, and in a game of this kind.

"Ah, no sign of a light even at the rear windows!"

Nick muttered as he drew near the large stable, which stood quite a distance back of the house. He had reached a position from which he could see the rear elevation of the dwelling, and from basement to roof it was shrouded in darkness. Not a glimmer of light from any window.

This puzzled Nick a little, for he could not believe the gang was there in the dark. Then he recalled the nervous glances which Pug Perry had cast toward the house.

"By Jove, I have it," he murmured. "They don't feel perfectly safe there, and have darkened the place in order to keep watch from the windows.

"That explains Pug Perry's nervous interest when we came in sight of the house. She feared the gang might see us and rush out. She knew that would alarm me, and start the ball rolling too quickly."

This theory was perfectly plausible, yet Nick had made a slight mistake, which he presently discovered.

"If they are at any of the windows, I must be doubly cautious," he muttered. "They might see me, when I cannot see them, which would not suit me at all. I'll slip around the stable, and have a look at the farther side of the house. I must find some way to get in there."

Moving noiselessly over the lawn, he made his way to the rear of the stable, and the moment he disappeared around the corner of it, a dark figure darted from the gloom near the wall of the house, and sped across the starlit driveway until it reached that front corner of the stable which Nick presently should approach.

The figure was that of Sandy Carroll, the escaped convict. In his hand he held an automatic revolver, and there was murder in his eyes, and in every line of his hard, hangdog features.

He crouched close by the corner of the stable and waited.

In less than a minute the convict heard the detective's approaching step, and, with his weapon raised, Carroll sprang out and confronted him.

"Throw up your hands, Carter!" he cried harshly. "Up with 'em or I'll shoot!"

Up went Nick's hands. He was a bit startled, but was

still in the ring, for he had learned through long experience that a man who threatens to kill, instead of doing it, has some reason for at least brief delay, and this proved to be true in this case.

Carroll first had something to say, now that he thought he had Nick dead to rights. Yet Nick gazed coolly over the gleaming barrel leveled straight at his breast, and said complacently:

"Hello, Carroll, is that you? I hardly knew you."

"You'll know it's me, all right, if you move hand or foot," growled Carroll, with vicious significance.

"Yes, no doubt, providing I'm near enough alive to know anything."

"Well, you'll not be, I'll tell you that."

"You'll plug me right off the reel, will you?"

"That's what I will."

"Actions speak louder than words, Sandy," said Nick carelessly. "Why don't you do it?"

"I'll do it soon enough, Carter," growled Carroll, in reply.

"You will, eh?"

"You'll find that I will. I first want to know why——"

But he got no further.

To add emphasis to his threat, Carroll forcibly had nodded his ugly head, and for one instant had allowed his leveled weapon to waver a little, and fall possibly an inch.

That instant was enough for Nick Carter, and with a lightning movement his foot rose from the ground, and the toe of his boot met with unerring accuracy the brawny wrist of the scowling convict.

The kick was a terrific one, and it sent the threatening weapon whirling through the air, and Carroll's wrist bent and nearly broke under the force of the sudden blow.

He uttered one fierce snarl of rage and pain, but before he could make a louder outcry, Nick had him by the throat, choking him to silence, and the two men grappled in a terrific hand-to-hand struggle.

Being compelled to use one hand to silence the knave, Nick fought at a disadvantage.

The convict grew red in the face. His flaming eyes were starting from his head. He gasped for breath, and felt his strength waning. Then with a desperate effort he grappled Nick around the waist, and tried to throw him.

This design was just what Nick had invited.

For a moment the two men swayed like gladiators over the rough ground, and once Nick nearly lost his footing on a rolling stone. Then he saw his chance, and with a quick move to one side, he suddenly cross-hipped his panting adversary, and before Carroll fairly knew what was intended, the burly ruffian's heels went high in the air, and he was hurled backward to the ground with a violence that shook every bone in his huge body.

His head struck with a deadly crash on a stone, and his every muscle turned lax and quivering.

"Whew! I guess I've killed him," muttered Nick, dropping to one knee beside him.

But Sandy Carroll wasn't the kind that is easily killed. Feeling of his breast quickly convinced Nick of the fact.

"Only stunned," he said to himself. "And now I can fix him."

Without delay Nick secured the feet of the prostrate ruffian, and then bound his arms behind him. Next he effectually gagged him, then looked for a place in which he could be confined.

The door to a basement cellar under the stable caught his eye. It fastened only with a heavy iron hook.

"Just the place," muttered Nick, throwing open the door.

Carroll already was regaining consciousness, yet still was decidedly groggy.

Nick did not wait for a further recovery, and with not very gentle hands, the detective dragged the ruffian to the edge of the stone steps and dumped him quickly into the cellar.

Nick quickly closed and hooked the door, then coolly resumed operations.

He paused only to look at his watch, to see that it was aften ten o'clock.

The walk from Pelham had taken most of the time, for the two fights already won had been brief and decisive.

Now stealing across the grounds from the stable, Nick took a look at the east side of the house. This also was shrouded in darkness.

"They're in there just the same," he grimly muttered. "The question is how many, and how to get in unheard."

Near the walk leading to the side door was a tall clump of lilac bushes, and stealing back of this, Nick carefully studied the several side windows.

The curtain at each was drawn down, and he decided that any of the gang who were on the watch would be on the street side of the house, or that side nearest Pelham.

"I'll take the chance," he muttered.

Quickly approaching the house, he examined a small cellar window, which was protected only with a wire screen. To remove this was the work of only a moment. Then he found that the window was hinged at the top, and secured inside with a wooden button.

To work this button with his knife blade was child's play, and in half a minute Nick had the window forced, and was slipping feet first over its sill, and into the darkness of the cellar.

On reaching the floor below he checked the swinging window, and dropped it softly into place.

CHAPTER VI.

CAUGHT IN A BOX.

In the gloom of the cellar Nick paused briefly to listen, and he heard the sound of voices coming faintly from above.

"Bagley and another," muttered Nick. "I wonder how many more. It's just as I thought. They're in the dark up there, keeping watch."

By the momentary flare of a match, Nick located the kitchen stairs, up which he silently crept.

The voices sounded a little nearer, but were not in the kitchen. Nor could he yet hear what they said.

Softly opening the door, he stepped into the dark room. Then he discovered a narrow thread of bright light close to the floor.

"The hall door is closed, and the hall lighted," he said to himself. "They're not in the dark, after all."

This puzzled him a little, the fact that he had discovered no light from outside, and quietly opening the door an inch he peered into the hall.

It was vacant, and the adjoining rooms were in dark-

ness. A tapestry carpet covered the floor, and the furnishings were superior. On the floor beneath the stairway making upward stood a lighted lamp, the rays of which the stairs cut off from the front door of the house. Yet over the window of this door had been tacked several woolen blankets, evidently taken from the beds above. Now the truth dawned quickly upon the detective.

"Oh, ho! the London cracksman!" he murmured. "I ought to have guessed it. The knave has broken into the unoccupied house of some wealthy city resident. The crafty scoundrel thought it would be a safer retreat in which to work his game, and imprison the abducted woman, than a rented house would have been. Despite its isolation, and the fact that few people come this way, he has covered all of the windows, that no light may be seen from outside, and betray that the house is occupied.

"It's plain enough now, for sure. The gang consists of Bagley and Carroll, and the two crooks who came from England with Pug Perry. Carroll must have been watching outside. With him and Pug Perry done up in good shape, there should be but three of the gang in here. That makes the outlook softer than I expected, for three to one aren't bad odds when one has the drop. Now to locate and corner them."

These thoughts passed quickly through Nick's mind while he stood listening in the silent hall. Then again the sound of voices, as if from a closed room, fell upon his ears.

The speakers evidently were on the floor above, and Nick decided that the abducted woman must be imprisoned in one of the upper rooms.

While there was any possibility of it, the detective was resolved to get the entire gang secured, before giving any attention to their victim, so slipping a revolver into each side pocket of his sack coat, Nick tiptoed through the hall and reached the foot of the broad stairway.

A lamp was burning dimly in the next hall above.

With the utmost quietude, Nick mounted the stairs until he could see the doors of the several chambers. All except one was closed, and the rooms in darkness.

Nick looked through the open door, and in the lighted interior saw the speakers whose voices he had heard.

There were but two, however, Buck Bagley, the cracksman, and the English crook named Trull.

Before making a final move against them, Nick wished to size up the situation. So he crept up the stairs until his face was on a level with the hall floor. He could not see into the lighted room, but the words of its occupants now were plainly audible.

"Yes, the retreat is all right," said Bagley, in reply to a remark about the dwelling. "It lays away over my quarters in Sing Sing."

Trull laughed.

"It's very fine," said he, with a low English accent. "How did you get on to it?"

"All by chance," replied Bagley. "I was hiding out this way, laying low from the New York bobbies. It belongs to a New Yorker named Rokeman, who hangs out here with his family summers."

"Lit out for the season, eh?"

"Aye, and I hope he'll stay lit out till after we've vacated."

"Well, rather!" grinned Trull. "I twig you've covered all of the windows."

"That's so, no light can be seen here at night," explained Bagley. "Not many come around these parts after dark, but I'm taking no chances. The nearest house is a good half mile away."

"We're near the ocean, aren't we?"

"Pretty nigh."

"I thought as how I nosed it."

"What time do you make it?"

Nick heard the snap of a watchcase.

"It's a good bit after ten," said Trull.

Bagley rose from his chair and began pacing the room.

"How's her nibs now?" asked Trull.

"Easier when I was last up there," said the cracksman.

"Has she come to herself yet?"

"Not half to," growled Bagley. "But her heart action is much better than 'twas. I reckon she'll not croak."

"I hopes not, after all the pains we've taken to do the right thing," said Trull, with dry gravity. "You must have given her some dose of the knock-out."

"Aye, I did, and bigger'n was needed," admitted Bagley. "But I wanted to make sure we got her under cover here before she could open her trap."

"Very wise, too, Mr. Bagley. Very."

"I thought she was a goner, though, when we first landed her here," said Bagley.

"Very much so," nodded Trull. "It looked very like as how we'd have her dead on our flippers."

"That's why I rushed Pug to town after the antidote," said Bagley. "Lucky she's better, and her blooming heart on the move again. She'd have croaked for sure, if her life had hung on Pug's getting back here with the medicine."

"She'd have got here all right, Buck, only for her seeing that blarsted detective."

"The dickens! How did he learn of it?" thought Nick, suddenly startled. "This thing may not be as soft as I thought."

Still crouching on the stairs, he strained his ears for Bagley's reply.

"Blasted detective is right!" exclaimed the cracksman, with grim bitterness. "He's the only man on earth whom I stand in fear of. He's the worst sleuth in the whole business, the devil take him, and has fouled my lines more than once. But I'll yet get even with him."

"Yes, you will—not!" thought Nick.

"I'm cursed if I can see what clew he got that brought him to Pelham so quickly," added Bagley, in moody tones.

Trull shook his head.

"I can't say," he replied. "But she's a blooming wonder, that Pug is."

"Aye, that's right."

"She twigged who 'twas the instant she put her lamps on him. We was just hunting for the drug shop, we was."

"I see."

"Then Pug said as how she could lure him to the house all right, if I'd slip away and warn the gang to be ready to receive him here," added Trull.

"Oh, ho! so there were two of them in Pelham," thought Nick. "By Jove, I begin to scent trouble."

Yet he waited for Bagley's answer:

"She told you to come back here in the taxi, eh?"

"The which I did," nodded Trull. "She was very sure she could lure the detective here, so she was, for all the

long walk it is. She said as how she knew she could do it."

Bagley paused at one of the shrouded windows to listen for any sound from outside.

"It's strong two miles," he growled slowly; "but she ought to be here with him by this time."

"Mebbe they walked a bit slow," suggested Trull.

"Even then they ought to be here."

"Shall I go out and see if anything's wrong?"

"No, no," cried Bagley quickly. "Two of us must stay in here, in case she gets him into the house. It might take the two of us to corner him and call him down. He's a game cuss, and tricky, the devil take him."

"Two in and two out ought to do him," said Trull bluntly.

"Aye, that's so," admitted Bagley. "With Carroll and Garrett on the watch outside, he can't get away even if Pug isn't able to lure him in here. We'll wait a bit longer."

Nick, however, was not inclined to wait longer. The situation had taken on a far more desperate look, and he now saw how it had come about.

Owing to the heavy drug given her on the steamer, Bagley had feared that the Duchess of Westfield was about to die on his hands. He had sent Trull and Pug Perry to Pelham for medicine. There they had seen Nick, with the result related. Trull had returned in the taxi, and warned the gang. Then he and Bagley remained in the house to receive Nick, while Carroll and Garrett kept watch outside.

Pug Perry had made one bad mistake, however. She had showed Nick the house before they arrived at the grounds, and neither Carroll nor Garrett had witnessed what followed.

In the darkness of the grounds a little later, however, the two crooks had seen Nick stealing toward the stable. They at once knew something was wrong, since Nick evidently had located their retreat, and they suspected what had happened, and while Sandy Carroll remained to watch Nick, he sent Garrett out into the road to search for Pug. These were points which Nick could not possibly have anticipated, but he now saw just how the situation had come about.

It was now plain enough that there was another man outside.

"By Jove, I must settle that man Garrett first of all," Nick grimly said to himself. "If he locates Pug Perry, or discovers Sandy Carroll, there'll be the devil to pay here."

Then he turned to steal cautiously down the stairs. Before he could take the first step, however, a wild yell of alarm sounded from below and went ringing through the silent house:

"Look out up there, Buck! Nick Carter's on the hall stairs!"

CHAPTER VII.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

Nick leaped to his feet on the stairs. One downward glance told him all. At the foot of the stairs stood Garrett, the London crook. Sandy Carroll and Pug Perry, the latter with her hands still manacled behind her, were rushing through the lower hall from the back door of the house.

It had taken Garrett some little time to discover Pug where Nick had secured her, but he finally had done so. Then, missing Carroll in the grounds, and seeing no sign of Nick, the two had made a search for the convict, and finally had heard him banging with his heels on the bulkhead door of the stable cellar. They had released him, and then felt sure that Nick had stolen into the house, and, cautiously entering by the rear door, they had arrived in the lower hall just as the detective discovered the truth, and was about to start out after Garrett.

No sooner had the crook's yell sounded through the house, than Nick heard the chamber door thrown violently open, and saw Bagley and Trull rush into the upper hall.

It made a most desperate situation. Nick was right in the middle of the stairway, and was caught between two fires.

"Gimme that gun!" roared Carroll, who had lost his own in the fight with Nick.

He snatched Garrett's revolver from his hand, as he spoke, and then fired straight up the stairs at the detective.

Nick saw the move and sprang aside. The bullet grazed his arm, and was buried in the wall behind him.

"Look out!" yelled Bagley, pulling his weapon. "You'll hit one of us!"

"No, I'll not!"

"Kill Carter, Sandy! Kill the dog!" shrieked Pug Perry.

Carroll started to fire again.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

All three reports came from Nick's revolvers, in a single second. He now was getting in his work, and with a gun in each hand, he fired up and down the stairs.

Carroll reeled back with a bullet hole plowed through his right shoulder. Garrett and Pug Perry ducked under the stairs. They weren't inviting cold lead.

In the hall above, both Bagley and Trull were trying to get aim at Nick, without the danger of hitting Carroll, who stood at the foot of the stairs.

Close upon his three rapid shots, a roar broke from Nick.

"Get back! Get back into that room!" he thundered. "Back, or I'll drop you both!"

Then he sprang fiercely up the stairs, through the cloud of smoke from his revolvers.

Trull saw him coming, and made a dive into the lighted chamber and closed the door. The English cracksman was made of uglier stuff, however, and he hated Nick for keeps. He darted down the dim hall, dodged behind the wall of a rear stairway, and shot at Nick the instant he appeared up the front stairs.

The bullet passed within an inch of Nick's nose, and he recoiled involuntarily. Then a bullet from Carroll at the foot of the stairs tore a hole in Nick's coat sleeve.

It was getting to be warm work, and Nick knew it. He sprang down the second hall, and out of Carroll's range, just as Bagley's second shot missed him by a hair.

It was too long a chance to attempt to reach the cracksman, who was shooting from under cover, and Nick leaped for the nearest door.

It opened into a side chamber, and Nick sprang in and out of Bagley's range, and closed and locked the door, and he could now take a breathing spell.

"Whew! but that was a close call," he coolly muttered,

halting in the gloom of the chamber. "Ah, they think they have me caged."

Bagley's heavy voice was roaring through the hall:

"Get outside! Get outside, one of you! He's in the middle side room. If he tries to leave by the window, be ready to drop him."

"I'll go out there!" yelled Garrett, from the hall below. "Leave the side window to me."

"Look out you don't get shot from it," thought Nick, who could easily overhear what was being said.

Then Bagley came banging at the door.

"Open her up, Carter!" he commanded exultantly. "We've got you cornered, and it's your only chance. Open her up!"

"You go away from that door," shouted Nick promptly, "or I'll bore a hole in you through the panels."

Bagley scrambled to one side.

"Come out here, Trull," he shouted. "Watch the door from that side. If he shows his nose outside, plug him!"

"That I will."

"Is he in there?" demanded Carroll, now mounting the stairs.

"Aye, we've got him cornered," cried Bagley. "What's the matter? Are you hurt?"

Blood was dripping from the convict's right hand.

"Not bad," he replied. "The infernal dog pinked me in the right shoulder."

"Come here and let me bind it up," cried Bagley, striding toward the lighted chamber.

"Oh, 'twill keep a bit."

"You come this way, I say. Watch that door, Trull, and shoot him dead if he shows his nose. Strip off that coat, Sandy."

"Oh, it's not bad, I reckon."

"We'd best fix it all the same," persisted Bagley. "Has Garrett gone outside?"

"Yes," replied Carroll. "He'll look after the side window, all right. By Heaven, I hope I get just one more shot at that man," added the convict, as his lowering gaze fell upon the blood-soaked sleeve of his shirt.

Bagley laughed grimly.

"Patience," he said. "We've got him now, Sandy, dead to rights."

"I hope so."

"Leave it to us to pay off old scores, eh?"

"Aye, that's a safe leaving."

"He can't get out of that room without he knuckles to us," added Bagley; "and we'll starve him out, by Heaven, if he refuses to do that. We've got him hands down, Sandy."

Bagley really thought so, for he supposed that Nick was alone in Pelham that night. He went to work to bandage Carroll's wound, which was more painful than serious.

Pug Perry now came upstairs, with her hands still in bracelets, of which Nick had the key, and the three crooks grimly discussed what had occurred in and out of the house.

With a drawn revolver Trull meantime guarded the door of Nick's room, while Garrett, from behind a tree in the park, was prepared to shoot the detective the moment he approached the only window of the side room.

Nick was not idle all the while, and with a pocket electric flash light he made a quick survey of the chamber. It was furnished as the owner had left it, and offered but two ways of egress, the hall door and the single window. In one corner was a deep closet, into which Nick next peered.

"Eureka!" he muttered.

The first object to catch his eyes was a telephone, attached to the closet wall.

"That's the telephone Bagley used," he said to himself.

"If the connection has not been severed since he used it, I ought to be able to reach Pelham."

First he made sure that his movements could not be heard by the gang in the house, then stealing to the hall door he quickly located them by the sound of their voices.

"Fixing Carroll's wound, eh? I didn't miss him, then, shooting two ways at once," he said to himself.

Then he entered the closet, closed the door, and, with his handkerchief, muffling the bell on the phone, turned the crank.

In a moment the muffled bell ticked merrily.

In tones too low to reach the hall, Nick cried into the phone:

"Hello! Can you hear me?"

"Hello!" came the answer. "Yes, I can hear you."

"Are you the regular operator?"

"Yes."

"Been on duty all the evening?"

"Since six o'clock."

"Did a Pelham druggist call there an hour or more ago, seeking a man named Chick Carter?"

For a moment there was no answer. Then the voice of the girl operator asked doubtfully:

"Who are you?"

"Good for you, my girl, for your discretion," said Nick approvingly. "Chick Carter is my assistant, and I am Nick Carter, the detective, who sent the druggist with a note."

Now the girl talked glibly enough.

"Oh, is that so, Mr. Carter? All right, sir! Yes, the druggist brought your note here. His name is Page."

"Did he find my assistant?"

"Yes, sir. He was here when Mr. Page came."

"Good! What followed?"

"Your man Chick has started after you, with the druggist to guide him. Mr. Page saw which road you took with the woman, but he could not tell where you were bound."

"Nor could I at that time," replied Nick. "Did they leave Pelham afoot?"

"No, sir. Your assistant has Page and two of the town constables with him, and they started in an auto."

"Why was that?"

"You see, sir, Mr. Page was delayed quite a long time in watching which road you followed, so your man decided to go after you in an auto."

"Good for him," observed Nick. "Can you get a messenger for me at once, one who can travel fast?"

Nick foresaw that Chick, even if he came near the Rokeman house, would see no lights there, in which case he might assume that there was nothing wrong, and at once seek farther.

"My brother is here with his motor cycle," replied the girl.

"The very thing," cried Nick. "You start him after that auto, and tell him not to stop searching until he finds it."

"Oh, he'll find it, sir."

"Tell him to say to my assistant—note me carefully, now!

"Wait, sir! I'll take the message on paper."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir. Shoot!"

"I am at the Rokeman house on the shore road. The Bagley gang are all here, and have me cornered in the room in which the telephone is located. The house shows no lights, for the windows are blanketed. Approach on the quiet, for a man outside is watching the west windows to prevent my escape. Secure him quietly, then place a guard at the front and rear door. The others of the gang are Bagley, Carroll, Pug Perry, and an English crook named Trull. Plan to take them all in. I will contrive to keep them busy until you arrive.

"Have you got all that?" Nick now asked.

"Every word, sir," replied the girl; "just as you said it. I have it on paper."

"Good! Now start your brother with it after Chick Carter."

"He is just starting, sir."

"Now one word to you, my girl."

"Yes, sir."

"If this phone is used again to-night by another speaker, don't mention that I have used it, or betray that you know anything about this business."

"Trust me, sir! I understand."

"Very good! That's all," said Nick.

"And now, Mr. Buck Bagley," he added to himself, as he hung up the receiver: "I think I shall call the turn on you for the third and last time!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WINNING TRICK.

No sooner had Nick fixed things as he found them, than a heavy bang sounded on the hall door.

Darting out of the closet, the detective cried quickly: "Get away from that door! I'll shoot through the panel, if you try to force an entrance."

He didn't want them to suspect that he had discovered the telephone. And this was the very thing of which they now were afraid.

In reply to his quick response, Bagley's heavy voice sounded from the hall.

"Don't shoot," he cried. "We only want to talk to you."

"Well, talk away," cried Nick cheerfully. "I can hear you."

"What are you doing in there?"

"Sitting in a position from which I can cover that door, you can bet on that," cried Nick, now seeing what they feared.

"In the dark?"

"That's what. But I don't need a light to plug that door."

"Don't shoot," cried Bagley. "We only want to talk things over."

"Talk away, then, but don't touch that door."

A conference of any kind suited Nick to the letter.

It would give Chick time to receive his message, and to reach the scene.

Bagley and his gang stood whispering in the hall.

"He hasn't found it yet," said he.

"I told you he hadn't," said Trull. "I'd have heard the bell, if he had rung in a call."

"If he gets on to it I must break the connection," growled Bagley. "I don't like to do that yet, for I want to reach old Nelson again."

"We can hear him, Buck, if he tries it," said Pug.

"Are you dead sure he's alone on the case?"

"I'm dead sure he was alone in Pelham," replied the woman. "I watched him quite a bit before I tackled him, and I know there was nobody with him."

"Then he's the only one who knows we're here, and we're safe enough for the present," rejoined the cracksman. "We must get hands on him in some way."

"I say we'd better light out with the woman," growled Carroll, who was always suspicious of Nick's shrewdness.

"We can't do that before to-morrow, for we've no other crib in which to hide her," said Bagley curtly. "We'll plan for that in the morning. You wait a bit. We'll try to get hands on this fellow."

Bagley stepped nearer the door.

"I say, Carter!" he cried.

"Well, why don't you say it?" Nick promptly rejoined.

"What are you going to do about this?"

"What are you going to do about it, Bagley?"

"We've got you cornered, you fool. You can't get out."

"Well, you can't get in, so that makes us about even," retorted Nick.

"We can starve you out."

"I don't feel hungry yet. I'll let you know when I do."

"We can fire the house and make off with the woman."

"You'd better keep an eye on me while you're about it."

"See here! Can't we compromise in some way?"

"I never compromise with villains," replied Nick. "That isn't my style."

"You're an infernal idiot. Don't you see that we have got the best of you?"

"I might see it if I had a magnifying glass," retorted Nick. "With the naked eye, Bagley, it looks to me as if you had got all the worst of it."

"You can't get out, you fool."

"And you can't get in, you rascal."

"Oh, I say!" cried Carroll angrily. "Let's get out and take the woman with us. Two of us can keep him covered while the others do the job, and we then can light out and join you."

These remarks reached Nick's ears, and this move was the very one he was aiming to prevent.

Stepping over to the window, he peered out between the curtain and casing. He could dimly see the figure of Garrett, watching from behind a tree, but there was no sign of Chick.

Returning to the door, Nick reopened the game of talk.

"Hark you, Bagley!" he cried. "I'll tell you what I'll do."

"So you've come to your senses, have you?"

"Well, I've had time to consider the situation."

"Oh, you have, eh?"

"I'll admit you have a little the best of it, as things now look," said Nick, who really thought nothing of the kind. "If you'll do the square thing, I have an offer to make you."

"What's the offer?"

"Wait a bit. There are two sides to the situation, and I want you to see both of them."

"Well, state 'em," growled Bagley impatiently.

"My own side first," cried Nick, aiming only to gain time. "I'm in a sort of a box here, and I don't just see how I can get the best of you. Still I am not afraid of you, and probably can hold out here as long as you can. That is my side, Bagley."

"Well, go ahead."

"On the other hand, you fellows haven't got things dead to rights," continued Nick. "It's long odds you cannot safely remove the woman you have upstairs, and secrete yourselves in new quarters. Then again, Bagley, you never will be able to bleed Nelson out of a million dollars for her release, even if you don't get nailed in trying it. You are in constant danger of being caught, and that's just how the matter stands, Bagley. Now I'll tell you what I'll do with you in the way of a deal."

"Say it," growled Bagley.

"It's like this," said Nick. "I am working this case for Nelson and the Duke of Westfield, and they will do what I advise."

"Are you working it alone?"

"Just as I am."

"Go ahead with your terms."

"If you will agree to accept a reasonable ransom for the woman, say fifty thousand dollars, and will put me in communication with Nelson, I will advise him to settle on that basis, providing that detectives have not already run you down."

"We'll look out for that part of it," sneered Bagley.

"Now, one thing more," added Nick, resolved upon making the boldest kind of a move, in order to hold the gang there.

"What more?"

"To show you I mean what I say, Bagley, I'll open the door and let you all in here, if you'll give me your word that I shall be treated in man fashion."

"Will you take my word for that?" demanded the cracksman.

"If you give it—yes!"

"Make the ransom a hundred thousand, and I'll go you."

"It's the safest move," nodded Pug Perry. "That'll be twenty thousand for each of us."

"I'll go it," nodded Carroll.

"What do you say?" cried Bagley.

"I'll agree!" exclaimed Nick. "Nelson won't kick at that."

"Open the door, then."

"Mind you, Bagley, I make no terms to let up on you and your gang," added Nick. "Hereafter I will arrest you whenever I can lay hands on you."

"You'll not lay hands on us, don't let that bother you," rejoined Bagley contemptuously.

"That's all, then," cried Nick, coolly opening the door. "Here are my guns, Bagley, to show you I mean business, and am on the level."

And Nick smilingly extended both of his revolvers to the English cracksman.

Nick, of course, was perfectly fair in playing the fox in this fashion, for knaves are but crafty foxes, and cunning may be fairly met with its own weapon.

For a moment Bagley stared at the great detective in grim amazement. Then he growled slowly, as he took the brace of weapons:

"I've got a black score against you, Nick Carter, and I ought to wipe it out here and now, since I may never have another chance. But you're a sandy man, Carter, and I'm cursed if I don't treat you man fashion just this once."

"Your word was good enough for me, Bagley," said Nick coolly.

Carroll growled something under his breath, and appeared to be reaching for his gun. Bagley saw him, and cried, with an oath:

"Here, none of that! What I say here, Sandy, goes!"

"Mebbe it does," muttered Carroll sullenly. "But that man is Nick Carter, and I'll gamble we get the worst of it. But let it go, Buck. I can stand it, if you can."

Bagley made no answer.

"Here you!" cried Pug Perry, backing up to Nick. "Take these things off."

"Certainly," smiled Nick, willing to make any move that took time. "I'm sorry I had to put them on you. They fit nicely, don't they?"

"Too nicely," snapped Pug. "I don't like them, nor you."

"Look out that I don't put them on again," laughed Nick, removing the handcuffs and slipping them into his pocket.

"Wait a bit," cried Carroll, whose distrust nothing would overcome. "I say 'twill be safer for us if we put them on you."

"No need of it at all, Sandy," said Nick curtly. "Had I wanted to fly the coop, the way is clear, as you see. Just take me down to your telephone, and we'll open negotiations with Nelson at once."

"He's all right, Sandy," cried Bagley, striding into the room and lighting a lamp. "The telephone's right here, Carter."

"Here!" exclaimed Nick, pretending to be surprised.

"There in the closet."

"By Jove, had I known that, Bagley, I never would have made terms with you," cried Nick.

"Mebbe not," said the cracksman, smiling grimly. "Yet I reckon we'd have driven you to making terms."

"Possibly," dryly admitted Nick. "It did look as if you had a bit the best of it. See if you can ring up the Holland House. That's where Nelson is stopping."

"I know it," said Bagley bluntly. "The evening papers told me that. I've had one talk with him."

"You think you have," thought Nick, watchful for any opportunity to get the best of the situation.

The cracksman strode into the deep closet and approached the telephone. Both Trull and Carroll walked to the door, and remained standing on the threshold. They were curious to see what Bagley accomplished. But Pug Perry, with a woman's vanity, approached the bureau, to fix her disordered hair at the mirror. This piece of furniture stood near the window, across the room from the hall door.

There also was a heavy mahogany bedstead in the room, with the tall head of it against the wall into which the closet was built. The edge of this bed came within a few inches of the closet door. The foot of it came about five feet from the wall opposite the closet, and one glance showed Nick the possibility now presented.

"If I can get those three crooks into the closet, with the door closed and that bed against it, I can brace it in place from the opposite wall, and all three of them could

not force open the door," mused Nick. "That would leave only the woman here, and she would at once attack me. She carries a revolver in her skirt pocket, and with that I could quell her, and cover the hall door against Garrett, until Chick arrives. It will be quick work for a moment, but I reckon I'm good for it."

At that moment a growl came from Bagley.

"Say, Carter!" he cried. "I've got the Holland, but the clerk says Nelson is not there."

"He must be there," snarled Carroll, striding nearer the telephone.

Nick knew why the telephone girl had thus responded. She was following his instructions.

"Carroll's right," said Nick, approaching the door. "Sing out that Nick Carter is here, and see what that brings."

While he spoke, Nick drew the closet door a little, so that he could quickly close it.

Bagley started to comply, while Carroll waited at his elbow.

Nick shot one swift glance at Pug Perry. She still was at the mirror. Then Nick made one of those extraordinary moves by which he so frequently has reversed a bad situation.

He hurled Trull violently against the two men at the telephone, and instantly closed the closet door. Like a flash he drew the heavy bed before it, then sprang to the foot and forced the headboard against the door, which it completely covered.

The entire move was made in a second, and a smothered roar came from the closet.

Pug Perry obeyed her first impulse, and rushed at Nick to prevent his design. But Nick was ready for her, and with his hip against the foot of the bed and one foot braced against the wall, he both held the bed in place and seized the woman before she could evade him on seeing his intention.

A shriek of rage broke from her, but Nick had her securely gripped, and in ten seconds he had secured her revolver, then thrust her across the room.

All the while the three men in the closet were yelling furiously, and making vain attempts to force open the door. But Nick now had the bed securely placed, and had reached out and closed the hall door.

"You stay where you are, Pug Perry," he sternly commanded, covering her with her own weapon. "You don't leave this room."

The woman's head was turned with rage, and, despite the weapon, she darted to the window and threw it open.

"Garrett! Garrett!" she shrieked. "Come up here! Carter has us all cornered in the side room! Look out for his gun when you open the door! Hurry up here, you fool!"

She had caught sight of a dark figure rushing toward the door of the house.

White with fury, she turned upon Nick and cried:

"You wait! We'll have you yet, you devil! It'll be your life this time, and don't you forget it!"

"Don't let that idea please you," coolly answered Nick, not inclined to shoot her. "It will cost Garrett his life if he opens that hall door. As for you and yonder crooks in the closet, I have you all caged, and can hold the fort for hours. In less time, you vixen, you'll see with what results."

Pug Perry's reply was a scream of warning:

"Look out, Garrett! Don't open that door yet!"

The heavy tread of a hurrying man had sounded on the hall stairs.

Nick settled himself firmly against the bed, and covered the door with his revolver. Then a hearty cry came from the hall:

"Careful with that gun, Nick!"

It was the ringing voice of Chick Carter, and he instantly threw open the door and strode into the room. Behind him came two Pelham constables, one leading Garrett in irons. And behind these came Page, the Pelham druggist, and a young man in leggings.

The scheme laid out by Nick Carter had worked to perfection, and the rest may be briefly told.

In five minutes the detectives had the entire gang of crooks in custody and secured against escape, and in one of the upper chambers the Duke of Westfield's wife was found, sleeping off the drug given her, and otherwise unharmed.

Nick at once telephoned the good news to the Holland, and the duchess was restored to her husband's arms the following morning.

That same morning Bagley and his gang were lodged in prison, and ultimately received the extreme punishment for this and their earlier crimes.

In the stable attached to the Rokeman house were found the autos used by the crooks, which proved to have been hired from a garage in a near town, and were returned to their owner.

Nick's suspicion about the telephone wire was correct. A lineman of the company traced the wire, and found that a connection had been made to a long-distance wire a quarter mile from the house.

The quickness with which Nick had worked this case, doing the whole job in a single night, not only won him added fame, but also the lasting gratitude and a generous reward from those he so well had served.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APPEAL.

This proved to be Nick's last encounter with Sandy Carroll and the English cracksman, Buck Bagley. But when the great detective reached home that morning he found a letter containing an appeal for his services, which he found it impossible to refuse. The letter read as follows:

"THE PRISON AT WARRENTON, Pa., Tuesday, March 12.

"*Mr. Nicholas Carter.*

"DEAR SIR: I desire to enlist your services in my behalf. I am imprisoned here awaiting trial for the murder of my uncle, David Appleton. You have doubtless read the published reports of the case, but as most of them are grossly inaccurate, and distorted by prejudice, I shall lay before you here a statement of the facts as they are known to me.

"Mr. Appleton, who was my father's brother, lived in the town of Clinton, a suburb of Warrenton. He was a man of large means, possessing a controlling interest in the Warrenton Locomotive Works.

"Mr. Appleton was a widower. His household included his three daughers, his sister, and myself. I had held for some years a position of trust in the locomotive works, and had in many other ways enjoyed my uncle's confi-

dence. These facts I mention particularly, for they show the absurdity of the suggestion that I would murder him. Aside from any moral or sentimental consideration, his life was far too valuable to me. I inherit only a paltry sum under his will.

"I pass now to the crime. Three weeks ago, last Wednesday, about eight o'clock in the morning, I was eating breakfast alone. The ladies had already breakfasted. It was the custom for them to rise earlier than I and my uncle did. We invariably took that meal together, and almost always discussed business affairs for an hour or more afterward.

"On this morning we had several important matters to arrange, and I was, therefore, the more surprised at my uncle's failure to appear at the usual hour, and, after waiting half an hour, I sent a servant to knock at my uncle's door.

"He returned, greatly alarmed, reporting that he had obtained no answer.

"Very much disturbed by this occurrence, I hurried to Mr. Appleton's room. I wasted no time by going to the door. There is a balcony on the front of the house. One may get out upon it through the window of the library, at the end of the hall, and thence pass to a window of my uncle's room. That was the way I took. I found my uncle's window wide open, which did not surprise me very much, for he was a hardy man, who liked plenty of fresh air even in the coldest weather.

"The curtain of the window was drawn. I pushed it aside and leaped into the room. The servant had followed me; and before I had discovered what was the matter, this man startled me with the most deafening and terrifying outcry that I have ever heard, and instantly I saw the reason of his terror. My uncle's body lay on the edge of the bed, the legs caught among the coverings, and the head resting upon the floor.

"His head was a mass of fearful wounds, it having been beaten with some heavy implement.

"Before I had fairly placed the body on the bed, almost everybody in the house was clamoring at the door. I opened it, but would not admit the women, for the sight was too dreadful. I allowed two of the male servants to come in, and I sent another for Doctor Francis Wayland, who is our neighbor on the north. Then, leaving the two servants in charge of the room and the body, I went downstairs and telephoned to the police of Warrenton.

"I told the chief to send his shrewdest men to the scene, for a dreadful and mysterious murder had been committed. He sent three idiots. They arrived within an hour, and went rambling about the place all that day—all that week, in fact. They discovered nothing. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I managed to prevent them from destroying the meager evidence which was at hand. At last, after days and days had been wasted, they arrested me, on suspicion. The coroner's jury, consisting of the least intelligent men whom it was possible to select, brought in a verdict against me. The grand jury promptly indicted me.

"And here I am, awaiting trial, as I have already told you. I do not know what the evidence against me is. They must have something better than they produced at the inquest. There they dealt only in absurdities. A chambermaid swore that she came in late that night, having been—secretly—to a country dance with her lover. She said that she was just creeping up to her room when she heard somebody moving about in the second-floor hall, and, afraid to be seen coming in at that hour, she hid in a doorway; and while there she saw me pass through the hall toward the library, with a stick in my hand.

"It happened that a heavy cane belonging to my uncle, and usually kept in the lower hall, was found in his room, on the floor. I attach no importance to that fact, for the cane was not stained with blood, and showed no marks of having been used for such a murderous purpose. But the police claim that it had been washed. How they pretend to know that I am unable to guess.

"There was in the room, beside the bed, and steeped in blood, a fragment of a club. There is no doubt in my mind that that fragment came from the weapon with which the deed was committed, and that it should lead to the arrest of the murderer. But the police have been unable to do anything with it.

"The girl also said that, an hour later, she heard me moving about in my room, which is directly under hers.

"There is an unreasonable prejudice against me here, due to an encounter which I had some years ago with a violent old man who accused me of some slight intimacy with his daughter, a very ordinary girl, not at all likely to be attractive to a man in my station of life.

"My lawyer, Gilbert Price, says that that prejudice is still very strong, and that any jury in this county will surely be moved by it, for the story is known to all.

"In this emergency I call upon you. It is said by all that you are shrewd; that your eye can detect the smallest particle of evidence, and weave a theory that will make everything seem clear.

"Do this in my case, and I will show my gratitude in a substantial manner. Yours sincerely,

"ISAAC D. APPLETON.

"I find that I have neglected to mention another piece of so-called evidence against me. Just before the murder, I bought two hundred and thirty shares of the stock of the Iron Works Company. It was substantially all that remained outside my uncle's holding. The par value of the stock is one hundred dollars a share—there are one thousand shares. I bought at one hundred and eighty dollars, and it was a good bargain. It's worth over two hundred dollars. The prosecution will claim that I had the money from my uncle, and that I bought for him. It is a lie. I bought with my own money, and he had no claim on the stock. I do not propose to give it up. They haven't a document of any kind to show in support of their theory that I simply bought as his agent and would have been obliged to turn the stock over to him if he had lived.

I. D. A."

CHAPTER X.

THE VETERAN.

Nick immediately responded in person to the appeal of the prisoner, and, on his arrival in Warrenton, he went at once to see the prisoner's counsel, Mr. Price.

"I saw his letter to you," said Price, "and in one way it fairly stated the case. In another way it gave no idea of it.

"I have never felt so strong a prejudice against my own client as in this instance; and when I say that, it may give you some idea of the general feeling in the community. For, while I believe that Appleton is innocent, there isn't anybody else in the county who does. He hasn't a friend

left in it since his uncle was murdered. That affair of the old man and the girl which he mentioned to you was about the rankest thing that ever happened around here, and nothing but David Appleton's splendid standing—backed by his great wealth—saved the nephew from a long term in prison. The man reproached Isaac Appleton for his infamous conduct, and Appleton beat him within an inch of his life.

"Why do you believe him to be innocent?" asked Nick.

"His manner impresses me," replied the lawyer; "and, moreover, it's greatly in his favor that he should have called you in."

"That's a good sign," said Nick. "Now let's go and see him."

Isaac Appleton's face slightly suggested Mephistopheles, as actors represent him. In person, he was extremely thin as to his lower limbs and body, but his shoulders were enormously broad and heavy. His voice was monotonous, but he looked Nick straight in the face without a sign of evasion, and said:

"I am greatly gratified to see you, Mr. Carter, and I confidently expect that you will have me out of here within three days."

"That's asking a little too much," said Nick. "You're under indictment, and I guess the best we can do is to secure your acquittal at the trial a week from to-day."

"If you catch the right man," said Appleton, tapping Nick on the shoulder with an enormously long forefinger, "I shall be immediately released."

"There is something in that," responded the detective; "have you any suspicions?"

"None whatever," responded Appleton. "From the very first I have not been able to see a motive, and without a motive it is hard to form a theory."

"Had your uncle any enemies?"

"He was universally respected and beloved," said Price. "There's the great trouble in this case. When such a man as that is killed, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the motive is money. Now, the only man in the world, so far as we can see, who benefits by his death, is my client.

"The bulk of the fortune goes to Mr. Appleton's daughters. Of course, they are out of the question, anyway, but if their characters permitted suspicion, it would fail at once in view of the medical testimony. The blows which killed David Appleton were struck by a man, and a more than ordinarily powerful one."

"The trouble all along has been," said Appleton, "that the police investigation has been conducted by the most absurd idiots."

"Don't be too hard upon them," said Nick.

That ended the interview, which was almost barren of result, so far as Nick was concerned. He next viewed the scene of the crime. The house, as has been said, stood in the center of extensive grounds. There were winding paths among the trees, and several buildings of an ornamental character, including a handsome stable, which was handsomer than many rich men's houses.

The length of time that had elapsed since the crime, made it impossible for Nick to gather up those little bits of evidence which rarely fail to show themselves to a shrewd observer who comes upon the scene before others have had a chance to disarrange the surroundings.

Such being the case, Nick thought it advisable to confer with the officers who had begun the investigation. There were two of them who had really worked upon the mystery. They were Martin Delafield and John Rogers.

Nick was agreeably surprised to find that these men were very far from being the imbeciles that they had been represented to him to be. Delafield, in particular, impressed Nick as one who, with a little more systematic training, would have developed into a first-rate detective officer, and it was with him that Nick held his preliminary conference.

"I think I know about what you want, Mr. Carter," said Delafield, "but I'll have to disappoint you. There's very little in this case that a man can lay his hand upon and feel any confidence that he knows what he's got. You know fully as well as I do the evidence against Appleton. Now, I'm not working to convict him, but to get at the facts, and there are two points which may be in his favor. In this drawer I have the visible evidence on these two points."

He opened the drawer and took out of it a piece of wood about eight inches long. It was stained with blood. Its shape suggested at first to Nick that it had been broken from the big end of a baseball bat, and yet, on a closer examination, that theory would not hold. It came from a club of some kind; one surface of it was smooth. That, of course, had been the exterior surface of the club, or whatever it was. But on one end of it was fastened a minute bit of leather.

"Now, this," said the detective, pointing to the bit of leather, "was evidently a strap which went around the wrist of the person using the club. The wood was shattered by the blows, and this piece fell to the floor."

"According to your theory," Nick said, "the murderer must have held the big end of the club in his hand and beaten the victim with the little end of it. The curvature of the wood shows that."

Delafield shook his head wearily.

"I puzzled over that," he said, "ever since the first minute that I saw this thing, and I don't know what to make of it."

"Just leave it for a minute," said Nick. "What's your other point?"

Delafield took from the drawer half a dozen plaster of Paris casts of a human foot, or, rather, of a man's shoe.

"These," he said, "must be considered in connection with the servant girl's story. You have learned what she testified at the inquest. She says that she came in late that night, and that she saw Appleton in the hall, with a large stick in his hand, going toward the door of the library. Now, this occurred to me——"

"That the girl oughtn't to have been in that hall," said Nick, with a smile.

"Exactly, Mr. Carter; you have read my thoughts. If she entered the hall in the usual way, she would have gone up the back stairs, especially as she was desirous of avoiding observation."

"Which raised the question," said Nick, "how did the girl get into the house? Now, I'll venture a guess as to that, founded upon these casts of footprints: She went in through a window."

"You're right; she hadn't her key, and she climbed in by way of a window."

"Which she found open," said Nick.

"Look here, Mr. Carter, do you know all this beforehand?"

"Not at all," said Nick; "but I see your line of thought. You're looking for a burglar, or, rather, for a murderer, who entered burglariously, so to speak."

"I am," said Delafield, "and these are the casts of his footprints. I had some trouble in securing them, for the girl and her best fellow had trampled the ground under the window. But I succeeded in getting these. The shoe that made it was a big and rather a peculiar one. I ought to be able to trace it, but I can't."

"There is one thing more peculiar than the shape," said Nick. "The fact that all the footprints are rights. Didn't this man put his left foot down upon the ground at all?"

"I didn't succeed in finding a good print of the left foot."

"Did you find any print," asked Nick, "good or bad?"

"Well, no, I didn't. But, you see, those people had tramped around there so——"

"I'm afraid that won't work, Mr. Delafield," said Nick. "Is there a one-legged man around here anywhere?"

"Zion!" exclaimed Delafield, slapping his hand against his forehead. "What a blind man I've been! That piece of wood ought to have told me the whole story."

"Well, I wouldn't quite say that," said Nick; "but its secret is out now. It's a piece of a wooden leg."

At this moment Lawyer Price, who was standing behind Nick, uttered a smothered exclamation, and pronounced a name.

"Harvey Graves!" he exclaimed.

"Who's he?" demanded Nick.

"Harvey Graves," said Price, "is a veteran of the war. He served in a regiment from Warrenton, and lost a leg before Petersburg. Since the war he has made a precarious living in Warrenton; but, a little more than a year ago, Mr. Appleton heard that he was in distress, and gave him a position in the locomotive works. He was a good fellow, I always thought—a big, tall, robust man, who could get around faster with a leg and a stump than most men can with two good legs, and he was over fifty years old, at that."

"Where is he now?" asked Nick.

"He's left town," said Delafield, in the tone of a man who is very much ashamed of himself. "He left the day before the murder."

CHAPTER XI.

THE FATE OF THE OLD SOLDIER.

"As the case now stands," said Nick, "we have at least as much evidence against Graves as against the prisoner. I venture to predict that we shall find he was discharged from the works by David Appleton."

Delafield called up the locomotive works on the phone and conversed with several persons in the office.

"They don't know anything about it down there," said Delafield, at last, as he hung up the receiver. "They think the man was discharged, but they're not even sure about that, and, beyond it, nobody can even give a guess."

"If anybody knows about this," said Price, "it will be Appleton."

"S'pose you go over to the prison," said Nick, "and find out what he knows. I'll stay and talk with Mr. Delafield."

Price needed no second invitation to follow up this new development personally. He hurried away.

"Now," said Nick, "you have telephonic communication with all the towns around here. The best thing to do, in my opinion, is to put all the police forces onto Graves."

This work naturally required a considerable time. It resulted in no immediate information. Graves was not known to have been seen in any of the near-by towns.

Price returned before Delafield had finished his questioning, and Nick learned what the lawyer had discovered. Graves was discharged for dishonesty.

"Appleton knows all about it," said Price, "but he attaches no importance to it. It seems that Graves was employed about the office. The elder Mr. Appleton began to miss small sums of money. Then my client noticed that change frequently disappeared from his overcoat pockets, and at last he traced the thefts to Graves. The old soldier was accused. He protested his innocence, and became very angry. He grossly insulted his employer, and was discharged.

"He made no threats, and my client says there is no real reason to believe that the man had anything to do with this murder. It is true that he called on Mr. David Appleton at his house on the evening of the murder, to protest once more against his discharge. My client does not know what passed between the two men, but he is sure that if it had been of a violent nature, his uncle would have mentioned it in a conversation which the two Appletons had later in the evening."

"It seems very strange to me," said Nick, "that your client never mentioned this before."

"He does not appreciate its importance," said Price. "I begin to think that in reality he suspects somebody; that he has all along had an opinion, and has been waiting for more evidence.

"But, as for me, this new evidence amounts to a conviction. It is perfectly straight and clear. By heavens! What a scene! Think of that terrible creature beating out David Appleton's brains with that strange weapon!

"I've got track of him," suddenly exclaimed Delafield. "I've just telephoned to the railroad station to learn whether he left town by rail. He did not. He walked out of town. There's a man in the station who remembers having seen him about nine o'clock on the night of the murder, halfway from here to Marburg."

"There's a Grand Army post over there," said Price.

"Then there's where we'll have to look," rejoined Nick.

The investigation was immediately begun. Price remained in Clinton to complete the inquiry there, and verify, if possible, the story which had come from the railroad station.

Nick and Delafield motored over to Marburg, to find that no one there had seen Graves. The members of the Grand Army post were sure that he had not been in the town. They had made some inquiries about him already, and had been perplexed by the mystery of his disappearance; but had believed that he must have gone to Grattan, in southern Pennsylvania, where he had relatives.

"This looks very strange," said Nick. "He didn't go back to Clinton, and it seems that he never reached this place."

"You saw the road," said Delafield. "Is it likely that he left it?"

"Scarcely possible," responded Nick. "That road goes through a regular wilderness."

"But what are we talking about!" cried Delafield. "Of course he returned to Clinton. Otherwise he could not

have committed the murder. Upon my word, I'm getting very thick. We'll have to get back to Clinton and start over again."

"I'll take a look at that road as we go back," said Nick. "We mustn't run away with theories. Let's stick to what we really know. He was seen on the way to Marburg. We must track him from the point where he was seen."

They rode back slowly. Nick had suddenly become taciturn. He was buried in thought. They had ridden seven miles of the fifteen that separated the two towns, when Nick shut off the power, put on the brakes, and sprang from the car.

"Go on without me," he said. "I'll meet you in Warrenton at midnight."

After a fruitless protest, Delafield obeyed.

Nick kept his appointment. At midnight he entered the Warrenton police station, where Delafield was waiting.

"I've found him," he said.

Delafield leaped out of his chair.

"Where?" he cried.

"Under a bank of earth at the bottom of a ravine, seven miles from Clinton. I noticed the place when we passed it the first time. There had been a little landslide. I can hardly tell you why, but it occurred to me that Graves might have been under it. He was. I found his body there."

"What do you make of this, Mr. Carter?"

"Come with me to the prison. We'll see what Appleton has to say about it."

They found the prisoner pacing his cell.

"You have made a discovery, Mr. Carter!" he exclaimed, as Nick and Delafield entered.

"I have made several," Nick said. "The most important of them is this."

He took from under his overcoat the wooden leg of Harvey Graves.

Delafield seized it, and eagerly examined it.

"Here is where the splinter was broken off!" he cried. "A bit of this strap came with it, but the leg was still fit to walk on. There's a point that I'd been anxious about. I've been wondering how, if he broke this leg, he succeeded in getting away."

"So Graves was the murderer!" exclaimed Appleton. "Is it possible? Price partly prepared me for this, and yet I can hardly believe it."

"I can't believe it at all," responded Nick gravely.

"Why, what's against it?" demanded Delafield.

"This," said Nick, removing the paper which had covered an object that he carried in his hand.

It proved to be a large and rough shoe.

"I found it in the neatest hiding place imaginable," he continued. "It was under a flagstone of the hearth in David Appleton's room. Perhaps you may wonder how I came to look for it. It was missing from the bundle which I found with Graves' body. There was an old newspaper in the bundle that had held a shoe, but the shoe wasn't present. So I had to look for it. By the way, you're standing this very well, Appleton."

"What do you mean?" demanded the prisoner, in a hoarse and unnatural voice.

"Is this thing possible?" exclaimed Delafield, before Nick could reply. "Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Carter, that this creature here put up such a job as that?

"By all that's wonderful! And nobody would find it. The plot was too fine."

"That's about it," said Nick. "Appleton," he added sharply, "I'll have to put the handcuffs on you if——"

He was almost too late. Suddenly sweeping the table over against Nick, Appleton sprang upon Delafield. His sinewy arms encircled the officer. His right hand was on the handle of the revolver in Delafield's pocket.

Nick, however, was too quick for him, and before the maddened wretch could turn the pistol against himself, the detective had securely pinioned him.

Delafield, panting with his struggles, sank down on the bed.

"You've got this thing dead straight, Mr. Carter," he said. "What a situation! Of course, this man created the accusation of robbery against that honest old soldier. Of course, he followed him out of town that night, and flung his body into the ravine with his inhuman strength. The landslide on that steep bank was easily brought down to cover the body."

"But not too deeply," said Nick. "Appleton wanted it to be found. This shoe I have here made those tracks under the window."

"That part of the game came near being spoiled," Delafield broke in, "by the girl who was out too late, and who, after climbing in, closed the window."

"I wonder why she didn't tell about it," said Nick, "after she learned of the murder."

"She hated this man like poison," responded Delafield. "So she and her lover concealed the fact of the window being open. That took the essential feature out of Appleton's scheme. If we'd found the open window next morning, we'd have been sharper about the tracks, and would have guessed what that bit of wood was.

"Of course, Appleton expected that. And when we didn't find all the evidence he had so carefully prepared, what a position he was in. He was forced to bring into the case a man who was sharp enough to dig up that evidence. And he got one who was a little too sharp. He brought destruction on himself, and he was forced to do it."

"Appleton," said Nick, "you see that the game is up. Tell us why you didn't yourself give the clew about Graves. But, never mind; I can guess. You could not. You resolved at the outset that, come what might, you would never cast suspicion on that story by starting it yourself. That would have made everybody doubt it. Perhaps you were wise; but your shrewdness has not availed you."

Appleton had sat like a statue in his chair. Suddenly he spoke.

"Bring paper and a pen," he said. "Release my hands, and I will write a full confession of my crime."

It was done; and that confession bore out in every detail the theory which Nick and Delafield—to whom the great detective accords full credit—had formed from the evidence at hand.

The stock operation had been correctly interpreted by the general public. There lay the motive.

THE END.

"The Purple Spot; or, Nick Carter's Three Visitors," will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 31, out April 12th. This case, a remarkably interesting one, by the way, calls upon Nick Carter and his assistants to run down a man whose genius for crime is phenomenal,

who is a past master of the knavish arts, and whose evil influence reaches through his subordinates into every corner of the community. A symbol of vengeance, the purple spot, is placed on the brow of every wretched creature who, guilty of treachery, has become the victim of this man's vengeful punishment.

A FROZEN CLEW;

Or, THE COLD STORAGE MYSTERY.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Pegeg Cavendish, captain of a fishing boat, is found dead in one of the rooms of the Atlas Cold Storage Company by Weaver, an employee of the company. Cavendish had been in to see some fish that he had in storage. Burton, a clerk in the office, who was not on good terms with Cavendish, because of the attention he had persisted in showing Cavendish's daughter, had shown Cavendish to the room in which his frozen body was found. Detective Keene, who is assigned to the case, discovers, near the body, a glass vial containing a frozen substance. Keene and a group of employees of the company are grouped about the body, when Keene asks Weaver if he can account for some frozen fish that are lying about on the floor. Weaver replies that he can't. A voice from the group about the body then cries that "a boy of ten could answer that question."

CHAPTER IV.

MR. WAGNER'S STARTLING TESTIMONY.

The startling interruption was imbued with a caustic mingling of sarcasm and contempt, and had issued in resonant chest tones from the lips of the beetle-browed engineer of the Atlas Cold Storage, the man named John Wagner. He thrust himself forward while speaking, and, with an inviting stare that bordered close upon insolence, he surveyed the calm face of the detective, as much as if he challenged being asked the same question.

A curious light momentarily showed in the depths of Keene's grave eyes; but he responded with careless deliberation, and a faint smile playing around his clean-cut lips:

"An elephant's nose, as you term it, is quite a distinctive feature of the animal's face. What do you say, Mr. Wagner, in explanation of the fact that the frozen fish lie yonder, rather than in the bin where they belong?"

"What do I say?" cried Mr. Wagner, wisely wagging his red head and starting out from the group of men. "What would any man say who stopped to think a bit? What would you do, or any man do, if he found himself shut in here with the lights out, and death from freezing staring him in the face?"

"I presume that he would try to get out," said Keene dryly.

"Sure he'd try to get out!" exclaimed Wagner, with extraordinary interest and energy. "He'd have bats in his belfry if he didn't! Aye, aye, sir! he'd try to get out. And old Cavendish, sir, wasn't the kind o' man to lay down and give up the ghost without a scrap to prevent it —any o' these men'll tell you that, Mr. Detective! No, no, sir! Cavendish was a sandy old devil, from his toes up. I've seen enough o' him to know that."

"But what about the fish?" innocently questioned Keene, who was giving this fellow all the line he wanted.

"What about the fish?" echoed Wagner, with derisive emphasis. "D'ye think, man, he went and tapped on the door with his knuckles, the like o' that? Thundering guns! he'd not ha' been heard by a man outside with his ear to the wall. These walls are as thick as the door, man. No, no, sir! Old Cavendish just felt about here in the dark till he laid hold o' two or three o' these fish—stiff and hard as chunks o' wood, they are! And with these he banged on the wall, sir; and there they now lie where Cavendish dropped 'em just before he was overcome by the cold."

"By Jove, Mr. Wagner, I believe that theory is pretty nearly correct!" cried Keene, with a quick display of much appreciation and interest. "It's a hundred to one it is."

"It appears very reasonable," put in Mr. Raymond.

"And if you look on the wall where he beat against it," triumphantly added Wagner, "you'd ought to find signs of it, marks o' the blows, or some scales from the fish. This is only a theory, mind you, and they mayn't be there; but it——"

"They are here!" cried Keene, interrupting him with an unusual display of exultant approval. "Wagner, you'd ought to be on the force! Here are plain indications of heavy blows, and here is one of the fish with his head half gone. Good heavens! this man's experience must have been something awful. Knowing that help was so near, and yet unable to make himself heard! Would the sound of this blow reach the corridor, Mr. Wagner?"

As he spoke, Keene took up one of the frozen fish, a bluefish of six or eight pounds, and with it dealt the wall a forcible blow. There was no resonance in the sound that followed the stroke, however. It was like striking a wall of stone with a stick of wood. Even sound itself seemed bereft of its normal qualities by the awful cold of the room.

"Aye, sir, that sound would ha' been heard in the corridor, but only faintly, sir." declared Wagner, striding forward to stand by the detective's side. "Besides, sir, in the case o' Cavendish, the corridor most likely was vacant. A man would have had to be quite near to have heard that sound outside."

"That seems quite probable," admitted Keene.

"Besides, sir, this room is in total darkness after the door is closed. Old Cavendish couldn't ha' seen his own nose, say nothing o' seeing to bang and beat this wall, even if 'twould ha' done him any good. But his was the hand that brought these fish here, I'll lay long odds on that."

"I am quite convinced that you are right," replied Sheridan Keene, with a nod of approval. "This door cannot be opened from within, can it?"

"No, sir; not when it's fastened outside. It opens in, you see, and locks only with an outside bar, which closes it very snug to the casing. A man might stand here and yell his lungs out, and he'd not be heard by a man in the corridor, unless he knew the other to be here, and so should listen."

"It was a terrible situation for the old seaman," observed Keene, with a sad shake of his head. "If he was locked in here through carelessness, there is a case of criminal negligence against the person guilty of it. If it was done with malice aforethought——"

"The last is more like it, sir; a d—— sight more like

it!" Wagner quickly interrupted, with lowered voice. "If you had heard what I heard about here yesterday afternoon, you'd be o' my thinking, sir, I'll wager!"

Sheridan Keene did not quite fancy the manner with which this was said, nor the lowered voice and gleam of Wagner's small eyes; but the significance of it all, in a case of such serious importance, was not wisely to be ignored.

"Then you overheard the altercation between Cavendish and Mr. Burton, did you?" he demanded, with a display of eagerness to which Wagner was by no means blind.

"Aye, sir, I did," declared the latter, hitching his overalls higher on his hips. "Leastwise, sir, I heard parts of it."

"Where were you at the time?"

"I was busy doing a job on the elevator drum, sir, out yonder."

"At the top of the elevator well?"

"That's just where."

"Could you hear them from up there?"

"At times I could," replied Wagner, with an emphatic nod. "Old Cavendish had a voice like a foghorn, sir, which he wa'n't slow to use; and Burton's no slouch in a word fight. It grew so hot before they were done, sir, that I came down from the job I was doing, and thought I'd take a hand to part 'em."

"Did you do so?"

"As a matter o' fact, sir, I didn't. I rather made up my mind I'd better keep out o' the mess. But I stood a while in the corridor, and 'twas then I heard some o' what was said."

"Where were the two men at that time, Mr. Wagner?" demanded Keene.

Though his searching gaze rarely left the lowering face of the man with whom he was talking, his questions were asked with affected indifference only, yet with a rapidity which allowed of no interference on the part of Mr. Raymond, or the group of grave-visaged men standing a few yards away.

It was a curious scene, that of that fateful December morning—the strange environment, the motionless figure lying there, pale in death, the group of men shivering with the cold indoors, the erect figure and gravely earnest face of the young detective, with his collar turned up about his neck and his hands thrust deep in his overcoat pockets, while he confronted with steadfast gaze the round-shouldered, repellent fellow who appeared to know more than any other of the dissension which evidently had led to the direful tragedy. It was a scene long remembered by those who observed it.

"They were here in the room, sir," replied Wagner, ready enough to impart all he knew.

"Could you see them from the corridor?"

"Not when I first came down from my job, sir."

"Did you see them at all, Mr. Wagner?"

"Aye, sir, I did! The door yonder was partly open, and I came near enough to look in between it and the casing—right there between the hinges!"

"Where were the two men standing at that time?"

"Burton stood here, sir, nearly where I am."

"Did you see Cavendish, also?"

"Aye, sir, I did!"

Keene carelessly reached out his hand and laid it on the speaker's shoulder.

"Show me, Mr. Wagner," he said, with augmented earnestness, "precisely where Captain Cavendish was standing when you last saw him!"

Wagner involuntarily shrank a little from the unexpected touch of the detective, and a resentful gleam flashed quickly from his eyes; yet he instantly replied, shaking off Keene's hand from his shoulder:

"He stood right here, sir! He stood so's I saw his face, and 'twas red as a lobster, for all the cold. I never saw a man look angrier in all my life, sir. 'Twas a sight of his ugly face that led me to slip away and return to my job. I thought I'd best not shove an oar into troubled waters, since Burton was big enough and strong enough to look after himself."

"Was Burton also angry, Mr. Wagner?" demanded Keene, checking with a gesture an interruption from Raymond, who did not at all fancy the loquacity of his assistant engineer. "Give me the whole story, Mr. Wagner. It will have to be told here or elsewhere, so out with it. Did Burton appear to be angry?"

"Not in the beginning, sir," replied Wagner, who had caught a glance from his employer.

"Tell me the whole truth, sir!" cried Keene sternly. "How do you know that he was not angry in the beginning?"

"Because I heard him trying to pacify Cavendish," was the quick reply. "The old man was mad because his fish had been moved, and Burton was trying to square it. That's how the trouble began, sir."

"Well, how did it end, so far as you know? At what stage did you come down from the job on which you were engaged?"

"'Twas after five when I came down, sir, I'd say," cried Wagner, irritated by Keene's forcible manner. "I know that, sir, because I found it too dark to work when I returned. One word had led to another between the two men, and when I saw 'em they were hard at it, hammer and tongs, about Mollie Cavendish, the seaman's yallerheaded daughter."

"One moment, Mr. Raymond!" Keene sternly cried, again preventing an interruption. "Please do not interrupt him, sir." Keene's manner was exciting Wagner, as he intended it should. "Go on, Mr. Wagner," Keene said, turning toward him again. "What was the nature of the dispute between the two men, and how did the girl figure in it?"

"The girl is the seaman's only daughter," cried Wagner, with a malicious fire now glowing in his eyes.; "The old man claimed, and I guess he's more'n half right, that Burton has been a bit too friendly with the girl. She's a rattle-brained wisp of a thing, with more beauty than character, and it's odds that Burton——"

But he got no farther. His words had reached the ears of one of several men who were then approaching through the corridor, a man who started forward as if suddenly lashed with a whip. He came over the threshold and into the storeroom without an atom of color left in his face, and his every feature convulsed with swelling fury.

With a single sweep of his arm he cleared his way at the door, and, with a bound, had seized Wagner by the throat, catching up the latter's words with a passion close upon madness.

"What odds about Burton? It's odds that Burton will cut your lying tongue from your head, John Wagner! Say what you like of me, you cursed reviler, but decry

again the girl whose father lies dead there, and I'll not leave a whole bone in your miscreant's skin. Let go of me, stranger, or I'll do you harm! I'll not——"

Sheridan Keene had seized him from behind, and with strength superior to that of both combined, he broke the hold which Burton had upon Wagner's throat, and fairly hurled the impassioned man into the very arms of the startled observers, whom amazement and consternation had till then held spellbound.

"Secure him, gentlemen!" he quickly cried. "This is no scene to be enacted in the presence of the dead!"

Yet even with the words, the detective himself seized Wagner in his arms, crushing him bodily against the wall, and bending to whisper forcibly in his ear:

"Hold your peace, you fool! If you know aught of this man, tell me alone—and I will run him down!"

For an instant the eyes of the two men met, and those of Wagner changed like a flash, and the light of fear that was in them became the light of evil satisfaction.

"Let go!" he muttered hoarsely, panting for breath. "I'll do what you say!"

Sheridan Keene instantly released him, and swung round to the men who now held Burton by the arms.

CHAPTER V.

FRANK BURTON DECLARES HIMSELF.

The assault upon John Wagner had begun and ended in less than a minute, yet it had been as violent and vengeful as brief. The assailant, whom Sheridan Keene now beheld to better advantage, and whose anger yielded somewhat to the influence of his friends, was a man of about thirty years, with an attractive face and figure of an athlete.

His face was then very pale, though his eyes still glowed angrily; while his clenched hands and the nervous twitching of the lips beneath his dark mustache indicated that only by an effort could he yet contain himself.

"Who is this man, Mr. Raymond?" Keene quickly demanded, in authoritative tones, as he strode nearer. "Is this the Mr. Burton of whom we were speaking?"

Raymond merely nodded an affirmative; but Burton instantly cried, in a tone of resentment and defiance which he made no effort to conceal:

"What is it to you, whether or not I'm Mr. Burton? Who are you, that you should know?"

"I am Detective Keene, of the Boston inspectors."

Burton's manner instantly underwent a change. He started slightly, cast a quick glance at the face of Cavendish, and impulsively cried:

"In that case, Detective Keene, you have a right to ask. I beg your pardon!"

"Quite willingly granted," replied the detective, still with some curtness. "You, Mr. Burton, are the last person as yet known to have seen Captain Cavendish alive; and it is only fair you should know that what you now say possibly may be used against you."

Burton threw back his head with a scornful frown, and answered shortly:

"Thanks for the caution! Fear never yet has bridled my tongue, however, and it's least liable to do so in this case. It is long odds, sir, that I am not the last to have seen Captain Cavendish alive, whatever you or any other man may think about it."

"Do you know of any person who saw him alive later than yourself?"

"I do not. I know only that I left him alive."

"At what time, Mr. Burton?"

"A little after five o'clock yesterday afternoon."

"Where did you leave him, sir?"

"In the corridor, just outside that door."

"Did you have an altercation here with Captain Cavendish yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Do you care to state the occasion of it?"

"Why, no, indeed! It related to the fish which he had in store here, and which——"

"One moment, please," interposed Keene, raising his hand to stay him. "Were these several fish lying here upon the floor at that time?"

"They were not, sir."

"Do you know how they came there?"

"No, sir, I do not."

"Did you, Mr. Burton, leave Captain Cavendish in this room, or did he go with you to the corridor?"

"He went with me, sir, about quarter past five."

"Clear the way here!" Keene now cried, striding toward the open door. "Mr. Raymond, won't you send down for the street patrol at once. I want these people dispersed. Fall back, gentlemen! Back as far as the elevators, and don't obstruct these passageways. Close that door again, Mr. Weaver, and keep it closed till the medical examiner arrives."

During the brief time required for the foregoing incidents in the storeroom, the gathering in the corridor had been greatly augmented, and only after some delay could Sheridan Keene force back the numbers eager to get a glimpse of the dead man. He cleared a space in the corridor, however, where the air was much warmer, and to which Mr. Raymond and the others had quickly followed him, glad enough to leave the icy temperature of the storeroom.

John Wagner now drew back among the crowd, from which he stood grimly surveying the proceedings; but, with a gesture, Sheridan Keene prevented Burton from departing, even if he had been so inclined.

"Now, about your altercation with Captain Cavendish," said the detective, the moment he saw that Weaver had complied with his commands. "What was the occasion for that?"

"Cavendish found fault because his fish had been removed, and I resented his abusive language," Burton immediately replied, in forceful tones, and again frowning darkly when he found himself the very center of general observation, if not, indeed, of suspicion also.

"Was that all?" demanded Keene sharply.

"No, not all," retorted Burton quickly. "That led up to another difference which has existed between Cavendish and myself, growing out of the fact that I am a friend of his daughter, Mary Cavendish, who is precisely an opposite type of girl from what that scurrilous blackguard yonder has implied. I am not done with you, Wagner, for that insult, and I'll yet thrash you within an inch of your life!" he broke off to add, violently shaking his fist at the engineer. "You're a cursed liar, you know, and I'll cram your words down your own throat before I sleep, if I'm not run in for——"

"Peace, Frank!" interposed Raymond, who had constantly kept his hand through the younger man's arm, as if he knew his excitable temperament and feared to

what it might lead. "That kind of talk will do you no good, and may do much harm. Have no more of it!"

"You're no doubt right, Mr. Raymond; but I am not a man calmly to hear a virtuous girl defamed by a lying whelp like that one yonder," Burton answered, less violently.

Then his frowning dark eyes reverted again to the detective's, and he added roundly:

"Now what will you have, Detective Keene? I'll try to give you alone my attention; and let me add, sir, I am ready to answer any question you may ask, so be it I am able."

"I wish only to learn the facts in this case," cuttly answered Keene, who, for reasons of his own, had suffered Burton to freely use his tongue. "How long were you in dispute with Captain Cavendish?"

"May be a half hour, sir."

"Did you come to blows?"

"No, sir."

"Did most of the dissension occur in the storeroom?"

"Nearly all of it, Detective Keene. I had very few words with Captain Cavendish after we came into the corridor."

"Were you both angry when you left the storeroom?"

"Very angry, sir," admitted Burton. "Captain Cavendish was unusually excited, sir, and as he had a wicked tongue, which in most men I'd have answered with a blow, I decided, for the sake of another—oh, I don't mind telling you whom, sir! It was for the sake of his daughter! I decided I'd end the squabble by getting out of it. And I don't mind admitting that I wound up my part of it by telling Captain Cavendish to go straight to blazes; and I turned with that and hurried downstairs, without waiting to see whether he went or not. I hope heartily he did not, sir, though God knows it looks enough like it now. And that's all I know, Detective Keene, concerning the death of Captain Cavendish."

Sheridan Keene paid no attention to the murmurs of approval which quickly echoed Burton's words, and which had, despite occasional license, the ring of true and fearless manhood. He at once asked, with sustained austerity:

"Where did you leave Cavendish, Mr. Burton?"

"Right here in this corridor, sir, close by the storeroom door."

"Did you observe which way he went?"

"I did not see him from the moment I turned away, sir. I hurried down to the office, and remained there until after six o'clock."

"What did you infer about it?"

"I inferred nothing. I did not care where Cavendish went."

"Did you go down by the elevator?"

"No, sir; I took the stairs."

"Did you meet anybody on your way down?"

"No, sir."

"Did you while in the storeroom, or in this corridor, see any person excepting Captain Cavendish?"

"Not a soul, sir! But I have since heard that yonder abortive——"

"Never mind what you have heard," Keene instantly interposed. "I wish to ascertain only what you absolutely know. Have you been attending to your usual duties this morning, Mr. Burton?"

"No, I have not."

"Were you about the building when I arrived here, say, half an hour ago?"

"No, sir, I was not."

"Do you object to stating where you were?"

"No, sir, I do not; so be it you care to know," cried Burton, flinging up his head with a sort of scornful indifference. "I had just heard of the death of Captain Cavendish, and my first thought, and my greatest solicitude turned toward the motherless girl he leaves. I went to break the sad news to Mary Cavendish, sir, that it should be done more gently than others might do it; and I returned only in time to hear yonder cur speak ill of her whom I had left heartbroken and in tears. Don't blame me, sir, that I was cut deep by his lying words. You'd not blame me, had I sent him after Cavendish, even, did you know the innocence of the girl as I know it! Now, what more, sir? I've told you all I can, though you were to question me till doomsday."

"Where does Miss Cavendish live, Mr. Burton?" asked Keene, without heeding the young man's display of tender feeling.

"She boards at the North Hotel, sir, on Atlantic Avenue."

"Isn't that chiefly a seaman's lodging house?"

"Yes, sir; and where her father lived when ashore."

"And where is your home, Mr. Burton?"

"I recently have taken a room in the same house," said Burton, with a tinge of red showing quickly in his cheeks.

"What do you know——" but a disturbance at the end of the corridor suddenly clipped Keene's inquiry.

He turned at once and saw that the medical examiner had arrived, accompanied by two policemen, and with a wave of his hand and a slight bow of acknowledgment, the detective signified to Burton that his inquiry was ended.

Ten minutes later, Keene slipped out among the crowd and winked for Wagner to follow him aside, with whom he conversed for a quarter hour or more. At the end of that time he retraced his steps to the headquarters building in Pemberton Square, where he presently made his official report of the case to Chief Inspector Watts.

CHAPTER VI.

"THERE IS A WAY, CHIEF WATTS."

"In the light of the bare facts as stated to me, Detective Keene, what do you make of this case, from personal observation of the scene and of the several men?"

This was the question asked by Chief Inspector Watts, at the conclusion of the report made by Sheridan Keene.

It was nearly noon of the same day. The medical examiner had, long ere this, viewed the remains of the deceased; the body of Captain Cavendish had been removed to the room of an undertaker, there to lie pending further investigation by the detectives, and to await an autopsy should the case seem to require it.

Keene and Chief Watts were alone in the latter's private office. On a newspaper lying on the chief's desk was the small vial found by the detective on the floor of the

storeroom. It now was empty, the contents having thawed and leaked through the cracked glass, and all that remained of the dark fluid were the stains coloring the handkerchief of the detective. It no longer was a frozen clew; yet the vial and label still were left to work from.

Sheridan Keene drew himself up in his chair, and sat silent for a moment before replying to the chief's question.

"There are three theories which chiefly appeal to me, sir," he at length said earnestly; "and I am satisfied that the case is one requiring careful investigation."

"What are your three theories, Detective Keene, and the bases for them?" gravely inquired the chief.

"I will state them in the order of least probability, Chief Watts," Keene thoughtfully rejoined. "The first relates to Frank Burton. My observations of this man are favorable, and I find it difficult to believe him guilty of having, even upon impulse, attempted the life of Captain Cavendish by locking him in the storeroom. The man has a good reputation, and his bearing when I questioned him appeared to be that of innocence."

"Yet the evidence against him seems to be rather unfavorable."

"That is true, Chief Watts," nodded Keene. "He may, indeed, have lied to me. He may, as a matter of fact, never have left the storeroom with Cavendish, as he stated; and he very possibly may have ended their dispute by abruptly withdrawing from the room alone, and securing the door after him."

"That could very easily have been done, I think."

"The subsequent conduct of Burton hardly sustains such a belief, however," continued Keene. "I have learned that he at once returned to the office, which is on the street floor of the building, and did not leave there until he went home an hour later. Under the circumstances, that would have been very remarkable. Knowing Cavendish to have been locked in the room, and that by his release he would be seriously incriminated, Burton naturally would have remained near the room, or at least have returned to the corridor once or twice, to make sure no one was sufficiently near to be attracted by any disturbance which Cavendish might have been able to make."

"That is a point well taken," admitted Chief Watts gravely.

"I should think less of it, chief, were there any marks of personal violence on the body of Cavendish, indicating that he was unconscious when left in the room, and hence not likely to have tried to attract attention from outside. If unconscious, the man would have frozen in a very short time. I learned, further, that Burton is in love with the daughter of Cavendish, and means to marry her. It seems, even less likely, then, that he would have taken the life of her father, even though the latter had vigorously opposed his suit."

"That, also, is very reasonable."

"In order to be near the girl," continued Keene, "I learn that Burton has recently given up pleasant rooms uptown, and taken a room in the North Hotel, which is rather an inferior lodging house, with a noisy saloon occupying the ground floor. This appears to have been the act of a man whose protestations of affection were genuine; and, as I have said, I find it difficult to think that Burton is guilty of this crime, despite the incriminating circumstances by which he appears to be involved."

"What other theory have you formed?"

"That Cavendish may possibly have been locked in the room by accident, Chief Watts," Keene gravely replied. "He may have returned to the room after Burton departed, and it is barely possible that some employee of the Atlas company, seeing the door of the room open, closed and secured it. I am unable to find that any man did so, however; yet there may be such a man, and he now may fear to face the truth lest he incur punishment for criminal negligence."

"Have you seen the man who had charge of the storeroom yesterday afternoon?"

"I have had a talk with him, chief. I went to his home at the West End before coming here. His name is Morton. He states that he did not find the door of the fish room open when he went there, after the altercation between the two men, and of which he claims to have known nothing, being in another part of the building at the time."

"At what time did he go on duty?"

"At four o'clock in the afternoon, and worked until midnight," Keene replied. "He states that he visited the fish room about half past four, which was prior to the visit of Burton and Cavendish; and that he did not again go to that part of the building until about half past six. In that interval Cavendish easily might have frozen. On learning of his death, Morton exhibited great surprise, and appeared honest in his protestations of complete ignorance of the affair. So much for that theory, Chief Watts."

"I am not inclined to give it much credence," said the chief gravely. "If Cavendish had been accidentally locked in the room by an employee, who had no malice in the action, it seems to me that the seaman would have succeeded in attracting the attention of the employee before the latter could have left the corridor. It is true that Cavendish may have returned to the room to look over his fish; but I think that any employee who found the door open would, before closing it, have made sure that there was no person within."

"I am rather inclined to think that, Chief Watts."

"What is your other theory?"

"It relates to the man named Wagner, and I think it is the most probable of the three," said Keene, with greater earnestness.

"State it, please."

"I quietly learned that Wagner has been living for a year or more at the North Hotel, and that he also has had aspirations to the love of Mary Cavendish."

"Likewise opposed by her father?"

"Very decidedly, chief! Cavendish, who was away fishing much of the time, was exceedingly strict with the girl, and would allow no man to pay more than cursory attention to her. Very likely he is not much to be blamed, for the girl is only about nineteen years old, and is said to be very pretty. Be that as it may, chief, there are the facts."

"I infer, Keene, that you suspect some jealousy to exist between Wagner and Burton," observed Chief Watts, in his gravely attentive way.

"On the part of Wagner at least," Keene quickly replied.

"What were your special observations of that man?"

"They were decidedly unfavorable!" exclaimed the detective. "I think it is quite probable that his may have been the hand that locked Cavendish in the storeroom.

"If the seaman returned to the room after Burton's departure, Wagner, who was near by, would have had an opportunity to secure the door unobserved, and which he may have done in the hope of incriminating Frank Burton."

"Ah, this seems much more likely!" exclaimed Chief Watts. "What more of Wagner?"

"He states that he was fixing the elevator drum at the time of the altercation, and was led to come down to the corridor with the intention of interposing between the two men. He says he did not do so, however, but returned to his work. Now, chief, assuming that Burton had, indeed, locked Cavendish in the room, it seems to me that this engineer should also have heard the sounds made by Cavendish when he beat upon the wall. At least a sufficient noise should have been made to have attracted his attention. I've yet to investigate that matter more thoroughly, Chief Watts."

"Do so, by all means, Keene."

"I learn, however," continued Keene, "that Wagner returned to the engine room about half past five, which also was but a few minutes subsequent to the altercation. The conclusions drawn in the case of Burton, therefore, are equally applicable to the case of Wagner. He, too, it would seem, should have been led to hang about the corridor long enough to insure that Cavendish was not discovered. To that extent, the circumstances are surely in Wagner's favor, if they may be considered favorable to Burton."

"That is true enough," nodded Chief Watts. "Go on, however."

"But the balance is still less in Wagner's favor," continued Sheridan Keene. "In talking with this man, I observed that he was unconsciously betraying considerable eagerness to influence me to a certain way of thinking, as if secretly anxious that I should adopt a theory tending to involve Burton in the crime. I gave Wagner all the line he wanted in this direction, and I am quite certain that I am right in my inference."

"A very good idea, Detective Keene," bowed Chief Watts approvingly. "What more do you make of this?"

"I took occasion at one time to see if I could further the belief I had formed," Keene continued. "I carelessly laid my hand on the man's shoulder, and I discovered that he was trembling violently, as if with suppressed excitement or eagerness."

"Capital!"

"Yet that may have been occasioned partly by the cold, Chief Watts; but not entirely, I am sure," Keene went on to explain. "I then took the course which appealed strongest to me, that of giving Wagner the assurance which he evidently wished to acquire; namely, that I was forming a pronounced suspicion of Burton. He now believes that I am quite convinced of the latter's guilt, and am resolved to drive him to the wall. This artifice will enable me, I think, to make Wagner, if he is the guilty party, a tool for his own conviction."

"You are working up the investigation admirably, Keene!" exclaimed Chief Watts approvingly. "Go on with your analysis, and we will presently decide what move may best be made to discover the truth in the case."

Keene colored slightly at these expressions of commendation, but merely bowed his appreciation.

"I find," he continued, "that Burton encountered no person on the stairs, when he was returning to the office. It was a time of day when most of the employees were preparing to go home, and when that upper floor and corridor were very likely to be deserted until morning, except by the one man whose duty takes him to the fish room occasionally. Wagner would have known this, and possibly took advantage of it, believing the crime would not be discovered in time to release the seaman. On the whole, Chief Watts, while the crime was in that case very artfully committed, and offers very little absolute evidence against Wagner, I fully believe that the engineer knows much more than he has told."

"You judge also from your observations of the man, I take it?" inquired Chief Watts, who had abiding faith in Keene's ability to read men's character.

"Decidedly so!" exclaimed the detective. "He strikes me as an evil and treacherous fellow. Now, chief, concerning the vial I found on the floor. It appears to be a bottle of medicine, and the date on the label shows that it was purchased yesterday."

"So I observe."

"Evidently the vial dropped from the pocket of some person who was in the storeroom later than yesterday morning, and who did not miss it at the time," Keene continued. "I find that only the young man who regulates the temperature visited that room prior to the visit of Burton and the seaman. The vial may have fallen from the pocket of Cavendish himself, while he was beating upon the wall with the frozen fish, for I found it quite near them on the floor."

"Very possibly that was the case, then."

"If it did not belong to Cavendish, however, it is a very promising clew to the identity of some person who visited the storeroom after the crime was committed."

"But not necessarily so," observed Chief Watts.

"May it not have belonged to Burton?"

"It is possible, Chief Watts, but not probable," replied Keene. "For, by Burton's own testimony, and that of Wagner, who states that he saw him when in the room with Cavendish, Burton was not very near the spot where I found the vial."

"That is quite important, then. As a matter of fact, we should be able to learn who purchased the medicine, if we can locate the druggist who sold it."

"I have that in mind, also, chief."

"I infer that you have already thought of a way by which this crime can be placed where it belongs," said Chief Watts, smiling at the profound earnestness of his subordinate. "Am I right?"

"Yes, chief, you are right!" Keene quickly exclaimed. "There is a way which I think it may be done. And your question leads me to a side theory, so to speak, of which there is some little evidence, and to which I've given some little consideration."

"Well, Detective Keene, what is your side theory?" laughed Chief Watts. "If it is as clever as your third, that regarding Wagner, we shall be rather set upon a fence."

"Fortunately, chief," smiled the detective; "my side theory also includes and involves Mr. John Wagner, who, I think, seriously requires our attention in some very cunning and skillful way. I will tell you of what the evidence consists, Chief Watts, and with your permission

will submit a plan which I think may be worked to advantage."

"Let's have it, Keene, by all means!"

And Sheridan Keene drew his chair nearer, and proceeded to elucidate what he had been pleased to term—his side theory.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TRAPPING THE FOX.

"A good way to trap foxes," said Salmon Jones, of Lake Artel, Pa., "is to make a bed of ashes in a hollow out in the field and conceal the trap in it. The ashes ought to be eight or ten inches deep to make it work well. Foxes like to paw and dig in the ashes, and if the trap is all covered up you'll catch a fox about every time you set it. The trap should be sprung under water and dried in the sun before it is placed in the bed, for if you handle it the fox may get the scent of your hand, and the instant he does that he'll skip. After the trap has got dry it should be carried to the bed on a stick and placed under the ashes without touching it. On the end of the chain I have an iron claw, and the fox won't dash over the field very fast with the claw catching into every little bush and thing that stick above the surface. If it's freezing weather I build a little fire and hang the trap over it till it dries.

"An old fox bothered me night after night in one of my ash beds a few years ago. The trap was bare every morning when I went to look at it, and there were fox tracks in the ashes. It looked as though the fox had dug all around the trap, played with it, and found out what it was put there for. One morning I found all the ashes off of the trap and plenty of fox tracks around. Another morning the trap was bottom side up and more fox tracks in the ashes. I made up my mind that that fox wasn't going to get caught in that ash bed unless I changed things a little, and that day I caught a mouse and let it freeze stiff. In the evening I set the mouse right over the pan of the trap, as though it was alive, and the next morning I found a big he fox lugging the trap on one of his forelegs ten rods from the ash bed. A fox won't go near a trap that's baited, but he had seen the mouse, sprung at it, and got caught in the trap.

"Wild cats are the meanest bait thieves I ever came across. They will paw bait off of a trap and get away with it without springing the trap, and if the bait is hung up they'll manage to steal it. One fall I had a mink trap set in a spring run, and for bait I hung a fish on a stick right over the trap. Every morning the fish was gone, and there were a wild cat's tracks in the snow. I got tired of that after a while, and so I raised the trap to a level with the water and covered it with moss. The next morning I found a wild cat with its forefeet in the trap, and I shot it."

FRENCH POACHER THE MOST PERSISTENT.

The guards in the forest of Compiegne, in northeastern France, are ever on the watch for both wood stealers and poachers. Indeed, a series of minor engagements is always taking place between peasants and guards, and those depredations which the officials are powerless to prevent they are forced to "tolerate."

Sometimes, however, a guard is boastful. I heard one say: "The rich hunt the deer and the peasants, and pay the government for the right; but I hunt the women, and the government pays me. For it is twice as hard to catch a woman as it is to catch a deer." I have wondered since if he were not rather stupid, for I am always catching women chopping down small trees, their faces hidden in their mufflers and their outposts of children ranged at intervals near by.

When one of these catches sight of me a signal is given, the woman stops chopping and holds onto her head as though she were suffering, while the children squat silently like a group of rabbits, their eyes on my fingers till I pass.

I have never caught poachers at work, though I have seen them walking between gendarmes on their way to prison. Some of them are as famous as great hunters, and there was one, not long dead, whose chronicles have appeared in French journals. For his constant poachings he had one hundred and forty suits brought against him and spent full thirty of his sixty-five years in a cell. Both his widow and his son live to carry on his work; but the glory of the house is departed. Only the other day I saw the wife, poor thing, trying to earn an honest sou by helping to unload a wagon of wood and store it in a neighbor's cellar.

Of the three ways of poaching—with the gun, the ferret, and the snare—that with the snare is simple enough for a child. All one has to do is to carry to a given place a piece of wire readily concealed in a leg of one's trousers or in a petticoat. As all wild animals follow set paths in the woods, all that is necessary is to make a slip knot in the wire, place the loop in one of these paths, cover it with leaves, fastening the free end of the wire securely to the ground. When game of any kind once sets foot in this loop every effort to free itself only draws the wire tighter. Many hundreds of these snares are yearly found by the guards, though quite as many more are left to do their damage.

Conscience regarding government property is never anywhere a vitalizing factor in human conduct. *"Pas vu, pas pris,"* says the poacher to himself—and to you, whenever you question the dangers he has risked in acquiring plunder which he wishes you to buy.

CROCODILE BAIT.

"Wanted—Fat babies for crocodile bait. Will be brought home alive." When I first saw this advertisement in a Ceylon newspaper I thought it was a joke. Afterward I learned that it was by this means that the crocodile hunters secured their bait. It is no trouble for an English crocodile hunter to get these little children. The Ceylon parents have full confidence in Englishmen, and they will let out their babies to be used for crocodile bait for a small sum. The Ceylon crocodiles are lazier than any other, and are harder to get. They lie for hours perfectly motionless, basking in the sun. Hardly anything can stir them. But when tempted by a fat Ceylon baby, placed on the banks of the stream, they shake off their ennui, and their mouths water for a delicate morsel of brown baby. The crocodile gathers himself together and steers for the infant. When he gets about halfway up the bank the hunter, concealed behind some reeds, opens fire and gets his game. Then the baby is taken home to its loving parents, to be used for the same purpose next day. The sportsman secures the skin and the head of the crocodile, and the natives are given the rest of the carcass.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Umpire Awarded Prize for Showing Best Time.

President Ban Johnson, of the American League, has mailed to William Dineen, the umpire, a check for $200 as winner of the prize offered last spring for the arbiter who could show the least time average for games during the season. It was not generally known that Johnson had made such an offer until he announced the award. Dineen umpired 159 games, the average time of the contests being 1:55.

$6.40 Postage on Locked Bag.

If you send your traveling bag by parcel post be sure to leave it unlocked. A New York traveling man learned this lesson recently when the postman brought him a grip he had left in Pittsburgh, and for which he had wired. The parcel bore 64 cents in stamps, but because the bag was locked it came as first-class matter, and the owner had to pay $6.40.

Bottled Up for Twelve Days When Ship Turned Over.

One of the most extraordinary stories ever told of the sea was recently related by Captain Engellandt, owner of the steel sailing ship *Erndte*. He was at sea with three men on board, when a great gale came sweeping and tearing and screaming over the waves, and drove his vessel before it into the gathering blackness of night. The skipper stuck to the wheel all through the long hours of darkness, and the gale dying down to a snarling growl at 4 a. m., he relinquished his post and stepped down to his cabin for a change of clothes.

It was at this moment the real business of the day began. He had just got into dry underclothing, when the vessel quietly turned bottom upwards, and he found himself standing on the roof of the cabin, with the door over his head hermetically sealed by the ocean. Was ever a man in such straits before?

He climbed through into the hold of the vessel, where he found rasins, condensed milk, prunes, rice, and, of course, a Teutonic sausage. Eating sparingly of this healthy fare, and hammering on the steel bottom of the boat to attract the attention of any ship that might happen to pass by, he spent 12 days in this strange manner before he was rescued. The wreck had to be towed to a mighty crane before a steel plate could be unloosened and the skipper be free to look once more on the blue sky.

Woman to Fly Across Sea.

Robert E. Huber, of St. Louis, Mo., with the assistance of his wife, has designed an airship with which he hopes to fly with her across the Atlantic. He calls it a gyro-dirigible-hydroaëroplane. The machine is dirigible as an airship or as a balloon, and is heavier than air. Huber says it will make possible an easy and safe trip across the Atlantic. Mrs. Huber declares she surely will be a passenger when her husband attempts the trip.

To Create Life.

That it was possible to create human life by chemical means, and that a baby factory was not out of the question for the distant future was asserted recently by Doctor Martin Kellog Schermerhorn, of the department of philosophy, in Harvard. He spoke before the Metaphysical Club.

"Life is not confined to the animal and plant world," he said. "The whole universe is alive, and all that lives is conscious.

"Animals are conscious and gifted with the power of thought and imagination, even though Roosevelt, who thinks himself a great hunter, says they do not know when they are being slaughtered.

"Plants are conscious, and Ruskin and Goethe agree they are capable of exercising strategy and forethought. Even Darwin said plants were sensitive, and hence he must have believed they were conscious.

"It is obvious that the evolution from so-called matter to human life is possible. The chemist of the future will labor so that men shall be made in baby factories as chickens are hatched in incubators."

Harvard and Indians on Cornell Schedule.

The addition of Harvard and the Carlisle Indians is the feature of the Cornell football schedule announced recently by the athletic management.

Dartmouth, Pennsylvania State, Williams, and Allegheny were dropped and Ursinus and Lafayette added with the two larger attractions.

The schedule follows:

September 24, Ursinus at Ithaca; 25, Colgate at Ithaca; October 4, Oberlin at Ithaca; 11, Carlisle at Ithaca; 18, Bucknell at Ithaca; 25, University of Pittsburgh at Ithaca; November 1, Harvard at Cambridge; 8, Michigan at Ithaca; 15, Lafayette at Ithaca; 27 (Thanksgiving Day), Pennsylvania at Philadelphia.

Apples as Liquor Cure.

The Chicago Clean Food Club sold 15,000 barrels of apples in one day recently. To put this quantity of apples in circulation required the service of twenty-five commission firms, 3,000 grocers, and 1,000 women inspectors. The apples were sold to poor families at a price of $1.60 to $2.75 a barrel.

"The first of January there were 5,000,000 barrels and 6,000,000 boxes of apples in cold storage in the United States," said Mrs. J. C. Bley. "In 1912 25 per cent of the stored apples had to be destroyed because they were held too long. The people need apples and will buy them if the price is not too high. Any man or woman who eats apples will not drink liquor. The apple is doing wonders in the way of liquor cure."

To Aid English Athletes.

With a view to enabling Great Britain to make a better showing in the Olympic games to be held in Berlin in 1916 than they did at Stockholm last year, it is announced that the Amateur Athletic Association has arranged a financial plan to assist the English athletes systematically to train for that event.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Olympic games last year Lord Desborough, presiding at a meeting of the Athletic Advisory Club, held to consider the poor showing

of Great Britain's athletes, proposed that a fund of $25,000 should be raised in each of the next three years, and $50,000 in 1916 to be used in preparing Englishmen to compete at Berlin. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle suggested that the $125,000 be raised by public appeal.

Serves Life Term for Bacon Theft.

Sent to the Ohio penitentiary, a life prisoner, six years ago, William Welch, whose crime was the theft of a side of bacon from an inhabited dwelling, has been as lost to the world as if he were dead.

A year ago Welch lost his mind, and was removed to the ward for the criminal insane at the Columbus State Hospital.

No one seemed to be interested in the convict from the moment the iron gates of the penitentiary closed upon him until a few months ago, when George F. Joly, junior, of Atlantic City, N. J., came across the strange story of William Welch in a scrap book. He mailed a copy of the newspaper clipping to former Governor Harmon, with the following comment:

"I presume the judge who imposed this sentence communicated the fact immediately to the governor of the State, and that the man was pardoned after a year or two imprisonment. It makes me shudder to think, however, that perhaps this poor fellow's case was forgotten, and that he still is in the penitentiary, serving a life sentence. If it is not too much trouble the writer would be pleased to learn if this man was pardoned."

At Harmon's direction Warden Jones looked into the matter, and wrote Joly that Welch was still a life prisoner.

Later the attention of Governor Cox was called to the matter through his executive secretary, Price Russell, clerk of the pardon board. It was found, it is said, that Welch had become insane through brooding over his incarceration.

An Ancient Custom.

"Wassailing the apples" is an ancient custom observed annually in some of the apple-growing parishes of Devon, England. This year it was celebrated on January 6. Practically every man in the parish made his way to the largest orchard with guns and anything with which he could make a noise. Arrived at the orchard, the men formed a ring around one of the trees, while a farmer sang an ancient ditty, beginning "Oh! apple tree, I wassail thee." Then all the persons standing round expressed the hope that there would be a good crop of apples in the coming season. Cheers were given, and the men who were standing round said: "Now, Tom Pod, we wassail thee," at the same time firing off their guns. The health of the tree was then drunk, and a piece of toast stuck in one of the branches "for the robins" in the hope that it will bring luck.

Dog Saves Children.

A dozen children, ranging from 3 to 9 years, were saved from a rabid bulldog, at St. Louis, Mo., when a Gordon setter, wearing a muzzle, sprang on the mad beast, pinioning him to the ground.

Officer Patrick M. Falvey, of the mounted police, on his horse thirty feet away fired from the saddle, the bullet passing through the brain of the bulldog.

The protecting dog, unscathed, backed slowly away and prepared for another spring if his opponent moved again.

Mothers who a moment before had seen their youngsters ran to the spot where the affair occurred, embraced the children, showered their thanks on Falvey and the dog that grappled with the attacker was wept over.

John Cullin was walking along Emerson Avenue when the dog attacked him. A bad laceration was inflicted on Cullin's left thigh. The dog began running around in a circle, and then, with bared fangs, started for another man. Patrolman Falvey shouted a warning, and Cullin threw a rock at the dog.

The animal thereupon ran toward the patrolman, getting a hold on the horse's tail. Falvey's mount kicked off the dog, which then dashed across the street to where the children stood.

New Queen of the Hudson.

The *Washington Irving*, a mammoth steamer intended for passenger traffic on the Hudson River, was launched at Camden a few days ago. A novelty attending the launching was that the christening was done with a bottle of water from the Sunnyside well on the old estate of Washington Irving. The steamer will accommodate more than six thousand passengers.

Mule's Kick Restores Memory of Treasure.

As the result of an accident, John Allen, a farmer living near Enid, Okla, forgot where he had buried $3,865 during the panic of 1907, and as a result of another accident remembered where the money was hidden, and recovered it.

In the panic year Allen lost faith in the banks, and to be sure and keep his money safely, buried it in his pasture.

A few days later he was seriously injured in a runaway accident, and as a result lost his memory as far as the resting place of the money was concerned. He could remember other incidents in his past life, but could not tell in what part of his place the money was hidden.

While Allen was hitching up one of his mules the other day, the animal suddenly kicked him on the side of the head, and for some time Allen was unconscious.

He was sent to a Kansas City hospital for treatment, and the physicians removed a piece of his skull. With the removal of this piece, Allen at once recovered his memory, and when he returned to Enid he went at once to the pasture, located the stones which marked the burial place of the treasure, and, digging, found the money where he had placed it.

Women Dressed as Men.

The recent arrest of several women for dressing as men has brought to light the fact that there are places in the world where women dress in men's clothing and men don women's apparel.

Even in Paris there are women dressed in cheap, coarse, masculine attire, working as teamsters and day laborers. While it is against the law, the police wink at the fact and allow them to earn peaceably their daily wages.

In Persia, in some of the interior parts, the women wear the strangest, oddest trouser garments. They seem to like them, too, from the fact that they cling to them in spite of all efforts to make them don feminine attire.

Then there are the Alpine dairy maids who dress as men when they go about their work and look pretty, if we are inclined to take evidence from the numbers of men who yearly persuade them to cast off their masculine dress

and put on more clinging costumes. But then their eyes are so bright and their cheeks so red that they couldn't really look homely in anything they might choose to wear.

Again, far in the North, where it is freezing cold most of the time, and people dress to be comfortable and not to look pretty, the women are actually forced into trousers to keep warm.

The ancient women warriors always wore trousers. But their reasons were purely military. Besides, they were half masculine in manner and appearance, and dressed to accentuate their qualities. They had to make themselves into fierce-looking creatures to terrify the men on the opposing side, and from all accounts they succeeded admirably.

As for the stronger sex, there still seem to be men in existence who wear women's garb and enjoy it. In certain parts of Greece, Spain, and Albania there are bands of desperate brigands who, when they are decked out for attacks on strangers or neighbors, look for all the world like grand-opera ballet girls, in their short, brightly colored skirts, which are made very full, and sometimes even ruffled a bit. They seem tremendously proud of their attire, and rival bands strive to surpass each other in vividness of patterns and newness of styles.

Dog Races Fast Train for Six Miles.

Lucian Gray started for Boston on the express train, leaving his pet hound, Meteor, at the station. Determined to accompany its master, the hound kept up with the train for six miles, when it fell dead from exhaustion.

Will Lower Radium Price.

If the promises of scientists are fulfilled, radium, the market price of which is now $3,000,000 a pound, will soon be produced in large quantities on a commercial scale.

An Anglo-French company, capitalized at $1,000,000, has been formed for the purpose of taking over the South Terras mines in Cornwall, England, which have hitherto been worked for iron and tin. Heaps of supposed worthless débris have been deposited on high dumps, and an analysis of these dumps has revealed the fact that they are rich in pitchblende, from which radium is extracted. Madame Curie, Professor Jean Danysz, of the Faculte des Sciences of Paris, Professor Jacques d'Anne, formerly chief of staff of Professor Curie, and Professor Joly, of Dublin University, have reported on the mine, which, according to their opinion, may prove to be the richest mine of the kind in the world.

In the loose ore in the galleries and on the dumps are some 17,000 tons, ready for shipment to France, where a reduction plant for their treatment is being erected, and it is estimated that it contains 85,000 milligrammes of radium of the gross value of $8,500,000.

This estimate does not include the ore in the lower depths of the mine still unmined, which is believed to exceed in value the ore already mined.

The world's supply of radium is now 32 grammes. It is announced that continental bankers and British engineers have subscribed the capital for the working by a new process, invented by Professor Erich Ebler, of Heidelberg University, by which the costly method of producing radium has been revolutionized.

Large quantities of Austrian and Portuguese radioactive minerals are controlled by the corporation, which will, by the new process, it is said, reduce radium to a price rendering it possible to employ it for industrial, medical, and therapeutical purposes. It is further stated that the Austrian government is interested in the enterprise.

Cheaper, Bigger Parcel Post Urged by Hitchcock.

Postmaster-general Hitchcock's annual report, made public recently, tentatively suggests reduction of some parcel-post rates and increasing the limit of weight beyond eleven pounds; recommends civil pensions for postal employees, an increase in rates on second-class mail, which may pave the way for one-cent letter postage, the consolidation of the third and fourth classes, so books and papers may be forwarded by parcel post, and points out that during his administration expense of operating the postal service has been cut down $45,000,000.

Says Seven Hours' Sleep Just Right. No More, No Less.

"Seven hours' sleep is all that is necessary for any human being, and if obtained regularly in certain hours nightly will keep the body and mind in a healthy state," says Doctor Foertmeyer, coroner of Cincinnati, regarded as an authority on criminology.

"Much of the disease of to-day is due to too much or too little sleep. A person who sleeps over seven hours has had too much rest, which makes the mind sluggish and the muscles lazy. On the other hand, the person who has not had sufficient sleep is mentally and physically unfit to perform his or her duties with that snap and vim found in persons who have had the required rest.

"Men and women who commit crime, as a rule are long sleepers. Their minds grow weak from too much sleep, and then they acquire the 'don't care' habit, which often results in crime.

"Make it a rule to sleep seven hours and you will be better for it, mentally, physically, and financially."

Taft's Salary to be Five Thousand Dollars.

The salary at Yale for Professor William H. Taft as Kent professor of law will be $5,000, which is the maximum salary now paid to the upper grade of full professors. The salary will include the $305 income paid by the Kent endowment itself, the balance being made up from the general fund of the academic department.

This Beats "How Old is Ann?"

O. T. Knutsen and Miss Clara Guss, of Wolford, N. D., were married. At the same time the nuptials of C. C. Guss and Miss Mabel Knutsen were celebrated. Knutsen was the father of the woman who became Mrs. Guss, and Guss was the brother of the woman who became Mrs. Knutsen.

Now the people are endeavoring to figure out just what the relationship of Knutsen and his daughter are since they married a sister and brother.

Maxim Still Fighting Noise.

Hiram Percy Maxim, inventor of the silencer for firearms, said recently that he was working on a silencer by which it would be possible to eliminate noise from sick rooms, hospitals, and hotels. He spoke before the University Club in Hartford, and said that the world would see this invention within five years.

"It will shed silence as a lamp sheds light," he said. "This is not an idle prophecy, but one that will be realized. It will be based on the reflection of sound by parabolic

mirrors, and will consist of an instrument that can be placed between the source of sound and the person affected.

"With such a device it will be possible for an invalid to sleep next to a boiler factory or a business man to eliminate the noise of typewriters." Mr. Maxim said he was also working on silencers for locomotive exhausts, safety valves, and stationary engines.

Holds Crops Do Not Need So Much Sunshine.

A French scientist, Professor Muntz, says that just as good harvests can be expected after a dull summer as after a long spell of sunshine.

Professor Muntz says that the value of the sun's rays in helping crops is vastly overrated, his observations showing that crops were just as good after the summers of 1910 and 1912, when the skies were generally overcast, as after the universally sunny summer of 1911.

The reason for this, Professor Muntz says, is that only a moderate quantity of light is necessary to assimilate the carbonic acid in the air.

Japan in Need of Sixty Million Dollars.

Although the new budget for 1913 has been presented by the government, and its terms give universal satisfaction, there are grave doubts expressed by the framers of the document themselves whether the country will be able to meet certain obligations without a further loan, and a large one.

The three large amounts which must be met during the present year are 55,000,000 yen to cancel redeemed railway bonds, 35,000,000 yen for repairs on railways, and 30,000,000 yen for various enterprises in Korea, making a total of 120,000,000 yen, or $60,000,000.

It is realized that such a sum cannot possibly be obtained from the local market, and a foreign loan must be resorted to. This aspect is not encouraging. Advices from European capitals show that money is very tight there, either on account of fear—as in France and Germany—that the Balkan negotiations may result in a general European war, or—as in London and St. Petersburg—because money is kept in readiness to invest in Balkan enterprises as soon as peace shall prevail in the peninsula.

"It may be noted in this connection, however," adds the Asahi, "that the condition of the European markets is not so favorable for the issue of fresh Japanese loans, even though peace be restored in the Balkans, as at the time of the second Katsura cabinet. A still greater obstacle is the 4 per cent scheme, which the last Katsura cabinet started. The government certainly must give up the 4 per cent scheme and even submit to unfavorable terms for its new loans, yet the Asahi is still doubtful whether, after all this, the European capitalists will take up new Japanese bonds, for the present holders of Japanese bonds, which amount to about 1,500,000,000 yen, may think that to buy new Japanese bonds must result in a fall in the price of those in their possession. If so, the full execution of the next year's budget must become impracticable."

Dangerous to Open Golf Balls to See What's Inside.

In view of the serious accidents caused by curious persons who insist on cutting open golf balls to ascertain the method of manufacture, the United States Golf Association is preparing an announcement to all clubs in the organization warning the members against such a practice. Several instances have been recorded in the last year where cutting open a ball or squeezing it in a vise caused it to burst and the contents have blinded several persons. The warning is as follows:

"Owing to the fact that serious accidents have occurred in the past few years due to cutting open certain makes of golf balls containing acids and other sight-destroying compounds, the United States Golf Association warns all persons to refrain from this dangerous practice."

Lives After Burial in Coal.

After being buried under a hundred tons of coal for nearly an hour, John Reagan, an employee of the Boston & Maine Railroad, was rescued at Portsmouth, N. H., with great difficulty.

Reagan was at the top of a coal chute and the coal gave way under him. He was thrown into the chute and the coal forced him through the narrow space until he was at the mouth of the trough.

Other workmen, thinking that Reagan could not escape smothering to death, began to dig him out from the top. They got far enough so that they could see his hands raised above his head, but were unable to continue, as the coal fell on him as fast as they removed it. They were finally obliged to open the chute, and his body fell to the ground, a distance of sixteen feet, all the coal in the hopper coming with it. His comrades were surprised to find him still breathing.

He was unconscious for an hour. He sustained a fracture of the collar bone and several cuts, besides internal injuries.

Buffalo Bill Addresses Pony Express Drivers.

All the former pony express riders who could be reached were invited to the unveiling on February 17 of a monument erected in a park at St. Joseph, Mo., in commemoration of the pony express. Colonel William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) made the principal address. The monument stands upon the spot from which the pony express of pioneer days used to start for the Far West. It was erected by the local chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

To Kill a Man, Fifteen Thousand Dollars.

According to the conservation commissioner of a big life insurance company, $1,500,000,000 is a low estimate of the annual economic loss from preventable deaths in the United States. The experience of Colonel Gorgas and his sanitary corps in the Panama Canal Zone is a convincing demonstration that good health is a purchasable commodity and that illness can be insured against and prevented if the public is willing to pay enough for safeguards. The cost of accomplishing the wonderful saving of lives on the Isthmus is estimated at about $2.43 per person annually.

In contrast with such figures, which compare favorably with familiar per capita expenditures for fire and police protection and the conservation of material property, are the data relating to the cost of actual destruction of mankind. According to President Jordan, of Stanford University, it now costs on the average about $15,000 to kill a man in modern war, and in the Boer War this expense ran up to nearly $40,000. When it is recalled that in a time of peace we spend nearly a million dollars a day in our own country on matters concerned with past or future

years, it is comforting to know that the saving of human life is far cheaper than its destruction. Nations can afford to do their duty in preparing against a foe like the plague, the danger of which is always present and more ominous than war, quite as well as they can raise funds for defense against unlikely or avoidable human combats.

Two Actors Plunge into Icy Water on Motor Cycle.

None the worse for their ducking in the icy waters of the Shrewsbury, from which they were spectacularly rescued after diving off an open drawbridge on a motor cycle, Rodman Law, balloonist and steeplejack, and Rosetta Phoner said that they would go through the same experience again—for the same price.

Law, with Miss Phoner on the motor cycle with him, drove at high speed into the deep drawbridge. Crowds of excited spectators shouted warning in vain. With gasps of horror the onlookers saw the two take the plunge. Then a motor boat, manned by men in sailors' garb, speeded up and hauled the two from the water. They also rescued the motor cycle, to which Law had clung. The spectators started to cheer, but suddenly they noted with disgust a man on the bridge turning the crank of a motion-picture camera. It was just a new stunt for the "movies."

Hazing a Felony.

A North Carolina legislator has introduced a bill making hazing a felony, granting a pardon to the hazed who shoot their persecutors and imposing a jail sentence on college presidents who fail to suppress hazing.

Eliot Would Bar Bachelors.

In discussing a bill now before the legislature, which seeks to establish an immigration inspection board for Massachusetts, Doctor Eliot told a large audience at the Twentieth Century Club that the large numbers of unmarried male immigrants should be restricted to 15 per cent of the entire number of foreign-born admitted to the country.

Doctor Eliot argued against the blending of the different races, and his point taken in opposition to allowing the wholesale immigration of bachelors was in support of this argument. In taking this stand on the immigration question Doctor Eliot added his support to the plan advocated by United States Senator Dillingham, of Vermont, chairman of the Senate immigration committee, who said it would be a good thing for the nation to rule that only married men accompanied by their families should enter the country as immigrants.

This Railroad Has Eight Pensioners Over Ninety Years Old.

Eight of the pensioners of the Pennsylvania Railroad, residing in eastern States, are over 90 years of age. Of the eight, Andrew Abels, of Philadelphia, is the oldest, aged 95 years. Michael Eckerline, of Altoona, is 92; James Kaylor, of Altoona, 92; Elias Griffith, of Altoona, 91; James Shields, of Blairsville, 91; David I. Graff, of Columbia, 91; Thomas Payne, of Belvidere, N. J., 90, and Charles Jefferies, of Lancaster, Pa., 90. There are over 500 men who have been in the employ of this company for over fifty years.

Thorpe to Play Ball With Giants.

"Jim" Thorpe, the Carlisle Indian, who was crowned the world's greatest athlete at the Olympic games at Stockholm last July and has been stripped of his amateur achievements because he has confessed to playing professional baseball three years ago in the South, has been made a member of the New York Giants by Manager John J. McGraw.

In making Thorpe a member of the Giants, Manager McGraw outwitted four other major league clubs. The Indian had so many flattering offers to join big league clubs that he was in a quandary about what to do. He had received offers from the Chicago White Sox, Pittsburgh, the St. Louis Browns, and from Cincinnati.

Items of Interest.

How many bananas did you eat last year? If you ate less than five dozen you did not have your share, according to statistics just issued. It has been found that in 1912 enough bananas were consumed in the United States to have allowed every person five dozen.

Professor R. W. Wood, of Johns Hopkins University, says the craters of the moon are full of sulphur.

Farmers of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, report a 2,000,000 bushel crop of potatoes, valued at over $1,000,000.

The United States spends $32,000,000 a year caring for insane persons.

Sanitary bubbling fountains have been installed on one of the trains running between Chicago and Minneapolis, Minn.

Governor Simeon Baldwin, of Connecticut, advocates the lash for unruly convicts and children.

An anchor for lifeboats has been invented that is hollow, and filled with oil, which will still the waves after it has been thrown overboard.

Minute measurements of ball bearings on the axles of a New Jersey trolley car that has traveled about 150,000 miles in four years showed that they had resisted abrasion almost perfectly.

Must Buy Eye for Victim.

The biblical injunction of "an eye for an eye" was applied in a unique manner by Judge Curtis D. Wilbur in the juvenile court, at Los Angeles, Cal., when he sentenced Benedite Colora, eight years old, to purchase a glass eye for Louis Garcia, three years his senior. Benedite was arrested for destroying one of Louis' eyes with an air gun.

Democrats Sure of Senate.

With the election recently of Willard Saulsbury as United States senator from Delaware, the Democratic strength in the next Senate swung from the precarious figure of forty-eight, or exactly one-half of the Senate, to forty-nine, a majority of two.

Mr. Saulsbury's election, added to the victory recently secured in Tennessee, assures the Democratic party control of the Senate.

Loses $5 Prize, but Gains $1,500 Heritage.

Fred Walters, a young man who has been working on a farm near Glenmore, Kan., has come into good fortune through bad fortune. In walking across a field Walters found the remnants of a small balloon, one of a number sent up during a street fair, each balloon carrying a tag which entitled the finder to a prize of $5.

Walters carried the tag home and the following Saturday came to town to claim the prize. When he arrived he could not find the tag. Through his misfortune, however, the story of his finding of the tag was reported in a newspaper, and when that paper reached the county seat, J.

H. Morton, a lawyer, immediately wrote to Walters and asked him about his family history, explaining that he had had inquiries about a Fred Walters who had been traced as far as Glenmore, but could not be found.

The lawyer said that if Walters had come from Spokane, Wash., an aunt there had died and left him $1,500 in her will.

Walters replied that he had an aunt, Mrs. Joseph Weissmeyer, in Spokane, and that he probably was the missing heir. He left immediately for Spokane to claim his money.

Strangely Saved.

When a Soo Line train reached North Fond du Lac, Wis., Ernst Marth, a farm hand, was found clinging to the pilot of the engine, with a buffalo robe wrapped around him to protect him from the cold. Marth was driving in a light wagon to his home near Nekimo when the wagon was struck by the train at Black Wolf crossing. The horse escaped uninjured but the wagon was converted into kindling. Trainmen made a search for Marth, but he was not found until the train arrived at North Fond du Lac, thirteen miles from the scene of the accident.

It is believed that Marth's fur coat and the heavy robe saved him from death. He was bruised but not severely injured.

Texas to Honor Maker of First Flag.

The girl who made the first Texas flag, when that State was an independent republic, lies buried in a neglected grave near Fort Valley, Ga. Arrangements have been made by a commissioner sent by Governor Colquitt, of Texas, for the removal of the remains to Austin, where they will be received with all honor.

Miss Joanna Troutman, in 1836, then a girl of 18, fashioned the Lone Star flag, which is still the State emblem of Texas.

Boy Saved from Quicksand.

Andrew Hamilton, a lad of 12, faced death for an hour on the St. Mary's River bank, at Fort Wayne, Ind., when he stepped into quicksand. When found by several men, who after an hour had heard his screams, he had sunk to his armpits in the sand and was held so fast he could not be pulled out. It required quick work with shovels to save him.

Can Floods be Stopped?

The average yearly loss from floods in the United States is estimated at $100,000,000. Whether the estimate is high or low, the total is so appalling that the problem has seriously engaged the attention of the Federal government. The early start of the 1913 flood season, in which the Ohio and Mississippi rivers have done unusually heavy damage, has aroused interest in the bill introduced in Congress by Senator Newlands, of Nevada, which seeks to have the government spend $50,000,000 a year for ten years in river and water conservation, so that the sources of the great rivers may be harnessed in such manner as to hold back flood waters and convert them to the use of irrigation and power projects, and make them available for assisting navigation in dry weather.

Up to the present time the government's work in connection with handling of floods has been largely in the nature of relief. It has not been preventive. Whether preventive work can be made really effective is a matter of considerable discussion. Could its efficacy be absolutely demonstrated there would be little opposition to the Newlands bill. Eminent scientists have declared the scheme practical, but Congress has never shown much disposition to vote money out of the treasury on the say-so of eminent scientists.

What the government has done with relation to river floods has consisted almost entirely in the construction of dikes and levees, in the building of dams, and the widening and dredging of channels. These works are intended simply to care for a flood after it has arrived. The Newlands idea is to prevent the floods from starting.

That large amounts of water can be successfully stored has been amply demonstrated by the great government irrigation works in the West. These projects, however, would stand in about the same relation to flood storage as a mill race does to the Panama Canal.

With Bear in His Home, Farmer Hunts Outside.

For six weeks Frederick Brukelman entertained a bear in the cellar of his home, without knowing it.

Meanwhile he left his wife and two small children at home alone and joined farmers in hunts for the animal, which was leaving the cellar every now and then to visit hen roosts and pig pens.

The bear was discovered and killed by Charles Budd, deputy sheriff detailed to assist the farmers in the search. It had scooped out a hiding place behind the cellar wall. It was the first bear killed in Hennepin County, Minn., for more than twenty years.

Cubs Are Insured.

President Charles W. Murphy, of the Chicago National Club, has announced that he has insured the lives of Manager John J. Evers and Catchers James Archer and Roger Bresnahan for $50,000 each for the present year.

"I do not think I could replace either of the three players for $50,000, and as a business proposition I decided to insure their lives for $150,000 for my own protection," said Murphy.

President of Salvador Dies from Wounds.

Doctor Manuel E. Araujo, President of the republic of Salvador, who was wounded by the bullets and machete of an assassin on February 4, died recently. Presidential power has been vested in Don Carlos Melendez, the first designate.

President Araujo was attacked and shot at night by several men, one of whom, a Guatemalan named Virgilio Mulatillo, was arrested. Mulatillo, in a confession, declared that the plot to assassinate President Araujo had been concocted in Guatemala City.

"For Gallantry in Action."

The president has pinned on the breast of Captain Josephus S. Cecil, Eighteenth Infantry, a native of Tennessee, a congressional medal "for gallantry in action." The ceremony took place at the White House, and was attended by Secretary of War Stimson and Major General Leonard Wood, chief of staff of the army.

The medal was awarded Captain Cecil for his bravery in the battle of Bud-Jalo, in the Philippines, in 1906, when the officer, then a lieutenant, led a small detachment of volunteers up to a point within thirty yards of the enemy and drew their fire while the main body of troops executed a flank movement.

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We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

620—The Fatal Javelin.
621—The Ghost of Nick Carter.
622—A Strange Coincidence.
623—Pauline—A Mystery.
624—A Woman of Plots.
625—A Millionaire Swindler.
626—The Money Schemers.
627—On the Trail of the Moon.
628—The House of Mystery.
629—The Disappearance of Monsieur Gereaux.
630—An Heiress to Millions.
631—The Man in the Biograph.
632—The Time-lock Puzzle.
633—The Moving Picture Mystery.
634—The Tiger-tamer.
635—A Strange Bargain.
636—The Haunted Circus.
637—The Secret of a Private Room.
638—A Mental Mystery.
639—The Sealed Envelope.
640—The Message in Blue.
641—A Dream of Empire.
642—The Detective's Disappearance.
643—The Midnight Marauders.
644—The Child of the Jungle.
645—Nick Carter's Satanic Enemy.
646—Three Times Stolen.
647—The Great Diamond Syndicate.
648—The House of the Yellow Door.
649—The Triangle Clue.
650—The Hollingsworth Puzzle.
651—The Affair of the Missing Bonds.
652—The Green Box Clue.
653—The Taxi-cab Mystery.
654—The Mystery of a Hotel Room.
655—The Tragedy of the Well.
656—The Black Hand.
657—The Black Hand Nemesis.
658—A Masterly Trick.
659—A Dangerous Man.
660—Castor, the Poisoner.
661—The Castor Riddle.
662—A Tragedy of the Bowery.
663—Four Scraps of Paper.
664—The Secret of the Mine.
665—The Dead Man in the Car.
666—Nick Carter's Master Struggle.
667—The Air-shaft Specter.
668—The Broken Latch.
669—Nick Carter's Sudden Peril.
670—The Man with the Missing Thumb.
671—Feltman, the "Fence."
672—A Night with Nick Carter.
673—In the Nick of Time.
674—The Dictator's Treasure.
675—Pieces of Eight.
676—Behind the Mask.
677—The Green Patch.
678—The Drab Thread.
679—The Live-wire Clue.
680—Vampires of the Tenement.
681—The Policy King Baffled.
682—The Madman's Gig.
683—A Life at Stake.
684—Trailing a Secret Thread.
685—The Crimson Flash.
686—A Puzzle of Identities.
687—The Westervelt Option.
688—The Vanishing Heiress.
689—The Birth of a Mystery.
690—A Clue from the Past.
691—The Red Triangle.
692—Doctor Quartz Again.
693—The Famous Case of Doctor Quartz.
694—The Chemical Clue.
695—The Prison Cipher.
696—A Pupil of Doctor Quartz.
697—The Midnight Visitor.
698—The Master Crook's Match.
699—The Man Who Vanished.
700—The Garnet Gauntlet.
701—The Silver Hair Mystery.
702—The Cloak of Guilt.
703—A Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.
705—The Collodion Stain.
707—Rogues of the Air.
709—The Bolt from the Blue.
710—The Stockbridge Affair.
711—A Secret from the Past.
712—Playing the Last Hand.
713—A Slick Article.
714—The Taxicab Riddle.
715—The Knife Thrower.
716—The Ghost of Bare-faced Jimmy.
717—The Master Rogue's Alibi.
718—The Diplomatic Spy.
719—The Dead Letter.
720—The Allerton Millions.
721—A Play for Place.
722—The House of Whispers.
723—The Blue Room Mystery.
727—The Great Pool Room Syndicate.
728—The Mummy's Head.
729—The Statue Clue.
730—The Torn Card.
731—Under Desperation's Spur.
732—The Connecting Link.
733—The Abduction Syndicate.
734—The Silent Witness.
736—The Toils of a Siren.
737—The Mark of a Circle.
738—A Plot Within a Plot.
739—The Dead Accomplice.
740—A Mysterious Robber.
741—The Green Scarab.
742—The Strangest Case on Record.
743—A Shot in the Dark.
744—The Seven Schemers.
745—The Hidden Crime.
746—The Secret Entrance.
747—The Cavern Mystery.
748—The Disappearing Fortune.
749—A Voice from the Past.
752—The Spider's Web.
753—The Man With a Crutch.
754—The Rajah's Regalia.
755—Saved from Death.
756—The Man Inside.
757—Out for Vengeance.
758—The Poisons of Exili.
759—The Antique Vial.
760—The House of Slumber.
761—A Double Identity.
762—"the Mocker's" Stratagem.
763—The Man that Came Back.
764—The Tracks in the Snow.
765—The Babbington Case.
766—The Masters of Millions.
767—The Blue Stain.
768—The Lost Clew.
769—The Midnight Message.
770—The Turn of a Card.
771—A Message in the Dust.
772—A Royal Flush.
773—The Metal Casket Mystery.
774—The Great Buddha Beryl.
775—The Vanishing Heiress.
776—The Unfinished Letter.
777—A Difficult Trail.
778—A Six-word Puzzle.
779—Dr. Quartz.
780—Dr. Quartz's Oath.
781—The Fate of Dr. Quartz.
782—A Woman's Stratagem.
783—The Cliff Castle Affair.
784—A Prisoner of the Tomb.
785—A Resourceful Foe.
786—The Heir of Dr. Quartz.
787—Dr. Quartz, the Second.
788—Dr. Quartz II. at Bay.
789—The Great Hotel Tragedies.
790—Zanoni, the Witch.
791—A Vengeful Sorceress.
792—The Prison Demon.
793—Doctor Quartz on Earth Again.
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